Commentary
July-August 2006

Of Pills and Profits: In Defense of Big Pharma

Peter W. Huber

Why Israel Is Free to Set Its Own Borders
Michael I. Krauss & J. Peter Pham

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The Merchant of Mombasa—A Novella
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Fred Siegel

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What Clement Greenberg Knew
Terry Teachout

Books in Review
Daniel Johnson • Kay S. Hymowitz • Andrew C. McCarthy
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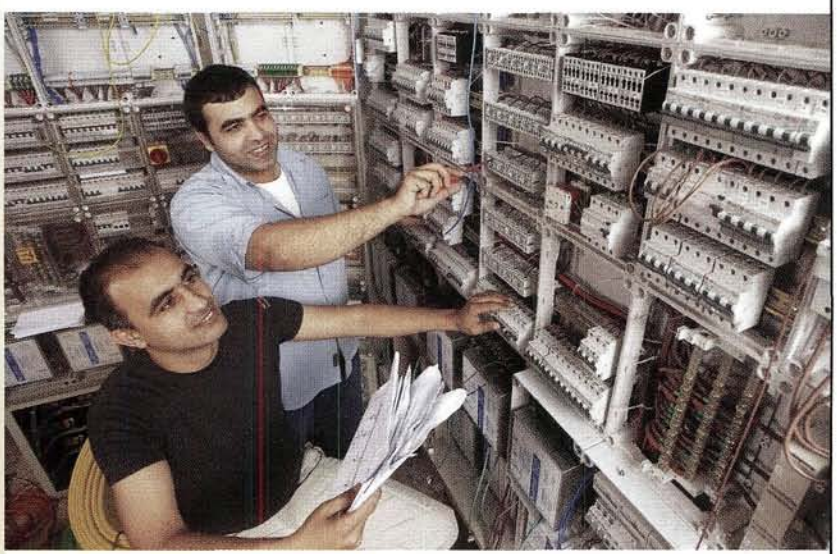

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Commentary

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Commentary
July-August 2006

Letters from Readers

The UN Fix

To the Editor:

Claudia Rosett is deeply opposed to the United Nations, as she makes crystal clear in "How Corrupt Is the United Nations?" [April]. She is, of course, entitled to her opinion, but in arguing her case, she makes a series of errors and false assumptions about the UN and its work.

Contrary to what she writes, the size of the UN's budget and staff are matters of public record, and while there is a multitude of different ways to count the numbers, there is no "mystery." The Secretary-General's report on management reform (posted on the UN's website) provides the facts: the UN's biennial budget for 2004-05 was roughly $18.5 billion. This sum includes the UN's regular and peacekeeping costs, as well as the costs of war-crimes tribunals in Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia.

The number of staff members assigned to the Secretariat and serving in field missions or at the New York headquarters is roughly 29,000. Obviously, adding the budgets and employees of other parts of the UN family would increase the overall totals. Costs have grown to keep pace with the volume and complexity of the UN's work, which has increased exponentially since the body's founding in 1945. Nonetheless, the Secretariat's staff under the regular budget has been reduced by more than 25 percent since 1986.

Claudia Rosett's conclusions and observations about the Oil-for-Food program repeat her by-now familiar views, errors, and gaps in understanding its workings, despite information already provided by the UN to correct the record. An example is her assertion that UN officials ignored oil smuggling by Saddam Hussein. In fact, the Security Council mandated a multinational interception force—provided by member states and under U.S. command—to prevent such smuggling. It was explicitly not the UN staff's job to do so; they had neither the authority nor the resources.

As the U.S. Government Accountability Office noted, "Under Security Council resolutions, all member states were responsible for enforcing the sanctions, and the United Nations depended on states bordering Iraq to deter smuggling." Paul Volcker's report on the program noted that UN staff raised issues of sanctions-busting with some of the Security Council permanent members, including the U.S., and elicited no response.

As Volcker recorded, Saddam made far more money smuggling oil outside the Oil-for-Food program than through surcharges and kickbacks from companies that signed contracts within it. Claudia Rosett also disregards Volcker's conclusion that "responsibility for what went wrong with the program cannot be laid exclusively at the door of the Secretariat. Members of the Security Council and its 661 committee must shoulder their share of the blame in providing uneven and wavering direction in the implementation of the program."

Claudia Rosett refers to charges of corruption within the UN's procurement activities. This entire area is undergoing an intensive overhaul, and specific allegations of wrongdoing are being investigated. Individuals guilty of criminal activity are being brought to justice. It is not true that "no national legal jurisdiction applies to the UN network." UN staff members enjoy "functional immunity" while carrying out their official duties in order to be protected from capricious prosecution by member states. But this can be—and generally is—waived when there is reason to believe that crimes have been commit-

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ted. The Secretary-General has explicitly promised to lift the immunity of any staff member charged with a crime in the Oil-for-Food scandal. He has already done so in the case of Alexander Yakovlev, who was found by the UN to have embezzled a large sum of money as part of an unrelated kickback scheme, and is now facing the American courts.

Claudia Rosett rightly condemns the shocking instances of sexual abuse and exploitation that have come to light involving peacekeepers, particularly in the Congo. But she neglects to record that the Secretary-General has responded with a policy of "zero tolerance" or that both the UN and its member states are taking remedial measures to prevent such acts in the future. Likewise, in her comments about an alleged lack of transparency in the handling of tsunami relief she ignores the accountability system put in place by the accounting firm Pricewaterhouse-Coopers, which enables the public to track online how funds have been received and allocated. Moreover, the UN system manages a minority—about $1.2 billion—of humanitarian monies for tsunami victims, the rest being administered by other agencies. NGO's alone handle $5 billion.

Although Claudia Rosett shows disdain for the broad sweep of management reforms being put in place at the UN, many of them address the shortcomings pointed to by Volcker and the increasingly complex responsibilities that the UN has been asked to undertake. She refuses to acknowledge that the Secretary-General acted immediately on the failings revealed by Oil-for-Food, implementing reforms in rules of ethical conduct, strengthening oversight and accountability, and increasing transparency. Moreover, the process of reform continues—the search for excellence is a constant effort.

Claudia Rosett finds it difficult to concede anything positive in the UN's actions—so much so that, while she derides the UN for being a state-centric organization, she views with jaundiced eyes Kofi Annan's efforts to expand contacts between the UN and civil society and the private sector—which she reduces to "collusion with big business." In one respect we are in agreement—the UN should be accountable to its member states and to those it serves. That is why the Secretary-General has sought to engage member states in efforts to improve systems and reach the high standards that the world's peoples have the right to expect.

Perhaps it is too much to expect Claudia Rosett to acknowledge the many accomplishments of the UN—such as promoting development, security, and human rights. The readers of COMMENTARY would benefit from other sources of information (including, perhaps, the UN's own website) about what the UN actually stands for and, whatever its imperfections, strives to achieve.

SHASHI THAROOR
Undersecretary-General for Communications and Public Information
United Nations
New York City

TO THE EDITOR:

I found little to dispute in Claudia Rosett's jeremiad against the United Nations—or at least little that I was equipped to dispute—until the article's last section. There, it departs from a methodical dissection of the organization's motley scandals and hypocrisies and begins sputtering about its menacing global agenda. The indictment thankfully stops short of analogies to Nazi Germany, but only just. The organization is apparently "predatory, undemocratic, unaccountable," and aiming for world domination. And "like the Soviet Union of old, the UN is unwieldy, gross, inefficient, and incompetent."

Thus, Claudia Rosett sees the UN as both laughably incompetent and deeply dangerous. At the root of the schizophrenia is a melding of the body's two identities: it is part sprawling, international bureaucracy and part clubhouse for national governments. I myself have no doubt that the UN bureaucracy is imbued with anti-Americanism and often endowed with shoddy management skills. Claudia Rosett dishes that dirt effectively, but even where there is no actual dirt, she lets the reader imagine that there is.

On the ground in Bosnia, Kosovo, and Afghanistan, I have witnessed the often creaky UN machinery and seen plenty of officials who cared more about their generous stipends than about their mission. But I have also encountered selfless international servants who risk everything to help the helpless. Claudia Rosett throws out a few "to-be-sure" qualifiers about the UN's good deeds, but in the end, they do not inform her analysis. Immunization of the world's poor and other humanitarian achievements are just not interesting to her.

Having painted the UN bureaucracy as darkly as possible, she then shifts seamlessly from internal management to international security, and lambastes the body for being a "spectator" on critical issues like nuclear proliferation. But she neglects to mention—and it can hardly be accidental—that here she is leaving the realm of the bureaucracy and entering the world of the nation-state.

After all, international security is the province of the Security Council, which is in turn dominated by the United States, Russia, China, France, and Great Britain. Claudia Rosett's insinuations aside, the Secretariat follows the Council's orders. It has no choice. Blame for inaction on Iran or North Korea rests not with Kofi Annan but with Vladimir Putin, Hu Jintao, and Jacques Chirac. If leakage in the Iraqi sanctions regime bothers her, she might speak to top State Department officials who winked at violations by Jordan and Turkey. And if she is outraged by inaction in the face of genocide, Warren Christopher and Condoleezza Rice have mailing addresses.

Apportioning responsibility fairly for the failures of global governance does not appear to be Claudia Rosett's bag. Building the UN into a global menace is good fun—and good copy. Whether it accomplishes anything is another matter.

DAVID L. BOSCO
Foreign Policy
Washington, D.C.

TO THE EDITOR:

When the Allies created the United Nations after World War II, their goal was to secure peace by acting to-

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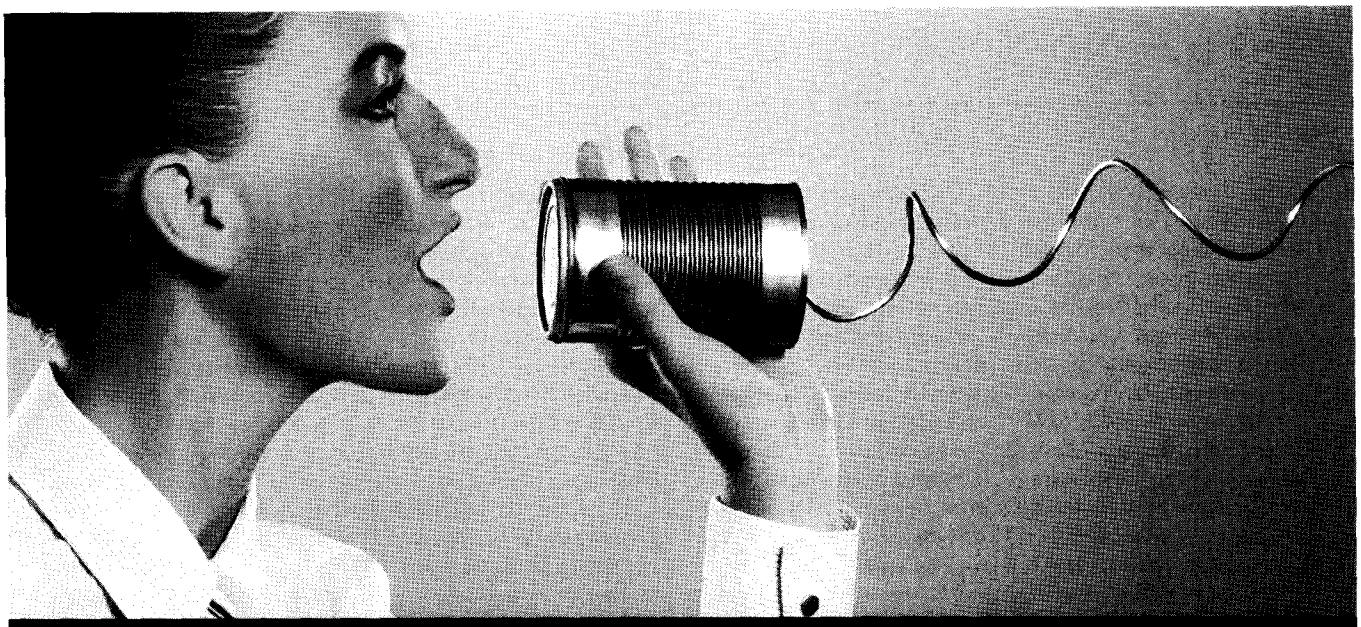

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gether as the world's policeman. The UN was also meant to help spread human rights and prosperity globally. As Claudia Rosett so amply, diligently, and helpfully demonstrates, this vision is mocked by too many realities of today's UN. There is no shortage of corruption in the UN Secretariat and among UN diplomats; nor is there a shortage of anti-Semitism and racism. The question, therefore, is whether we ought to throw over the entire place or engage in the long, arduous effort to change the habits and institutional culture that have developed over the past 60 years.

Because some UN institutions add value and provide ways of spreading the cost of doing good, I opt for accepting the need to persuade the rest of the world that a reformed UN is in everyone's interest, and in the meantime making use of what we can within the UN. Fortunately, the U.S. can undertake this work without sacrificing any vital national interest.

Since Claudia Rosett and others are doubtful that the effort required is worth the prize, I call attention to three examples of useful Security Council work in the past five years. Immediately after 9/11, the Security Council adopted Resolution 1373 obligating member states to prohibit active and passive assistance to terrorism. The resolution clarified norms and narrowed the legal space in which terrorists might operate. It has caused a vast increase in the number of states and institutions engaging in counterterrorism, and helped states lacking the proper capacity to obtain it. The world is better off as a result.

Security Council attention also helped bring about Syria's withdrawal of most of its forces from Lebanon. The serious UN-sponsored investigation into the murder of the former Lebanese prime minister Rafik Hariri already has led to a much more complete understanding of the crime than could have been achieved through French or U.S. efforts alone.

Finally, attention on Sudan, particularly the catalytic Security Council meeting in Nairobi in 2004 under U.S. leadership and in furtherance of a north-south peace agreement, also increased the hope of saving lives in Darfur. Action outside the UN was also an option, but addressing the issue through the Security Council and achieving the adoption of resolutions have undeniably helped.

These few examples show that the Security Council has and can make a positive contribution to international peace and security. Yet they are not enough. The international community keeps asking the UN to undertake larger, more important, and more complex tasks than ever before without improving its capacities and effectiveness. The Secretariat needs a new culture. It also requires a new personnel system that rewards merit, encourages ideas and risk-taking, and welcomes transparency and accountability. And civilian and military personnel need training before joining UN undertakings.

Just as institutions like the Human Rights Council have to break with their hypocritical pasts, so does the General Assembly itself. One small step would be to create subcommittees with rotating membership to oversee the Secretariat, like legislative oversight committees. Thoroughgoing reform would include a commitment to ethics. It is an open secret, for example, that national governments supplement the incomes of their citizens who hold high office at the United Nations.

To achieve profound change in the face of UN inertia and parochialism will require intestinal fortitude, stamina, and patience. UN dysfunction involves not only bureaucratic flaws and corruption but also the reality that among member states in the Security Council it is often extremely difficult to find common ground leading to effective action on matters of war and peace. That is why we and others sometimes seek alternatives to the UN in addressing urgent problems of the day.

NICHOLAS ROSTOW
The Levin Institute
State University of New York
Albany, New York

TO THE EDITOR:

Claudia Rosett's diligent pursuit of the Oil-for-Food scandal—in COMMENTARY and elsewhere—exposed corruption and a culture of negligence at virtually every level of the UN that was connected with the program. The Volcker Commission's independent inquiry, established under the pressure of her revelations, has essentially confirmed her findings (though its recommendations are unjustifiably soft).

Her latest essay shows in still greater detail the lack of accountability that afflicts large parts of the UN. Regretably, though, she only alludes to the most important questions that arise from all this. Should the free world, led by the U.S., fashion an alternative body to promote human rights? She argues for abandoning the "futile quest" for UN reform in favor of a new approach, but the U.S.-led attempt to create a "community of democracies" has thus far fallen on deaf ears. The European Union is simply not interested.

And therein lies the challenge. The U.S. may be able to win wars on its own, but it cannot succeed by itself in defending the values of Western civilization. Like it or not, the U.S. must build a coalition with the world's largest grouping of democratic states, the EU. Since the latter remains an ardent supporter of the UN, it seems we are stuck with it for now.

HILLEL C. NEUER
UN Watch
Geneva, Switzerland

TO THE EDITOR:

At the conclusion of her article, Claudia Rosett intimates that the United Nations is incapable of reform. I agree with her, but I would go several steps further.

I recently published a book titled *The UN Gang: A Memoir of Incompetence, Corruption, Espionage, Anti-Semitism, and Islamic Extremism at the UN Secretariat*. It is based on the ten years I spent at the Secretariat, ostensibly as director for political affairs but in fact as the top (and only) American spy, spying on the spies who spied on my country. My role there enabled me to get a comprehensive, inside view of what made the UN dysfunctional and its Secretariat a strange combination of maximally redundant activities.

The talk at the UN these

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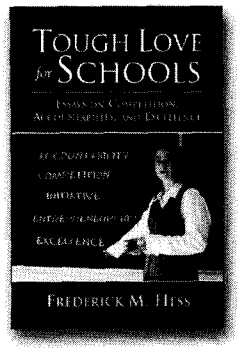

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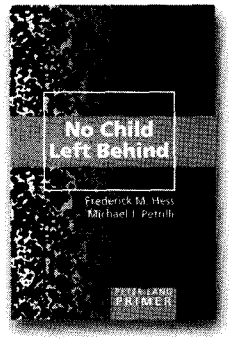

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days dwells almost obsessively on the need for some sort of reform. Should there be less secrecy or more secrecy in maintaining accounting records? But this is a contrived dilemma for an organization that has no financial independence or immunity from sovereignty, belonging as it does to the member states that fund its operations.

Critics of the existing vacuum in meaningful international cooperation continue to invoke the incantation that a world without some kind of viable international organization is inconceivable. But that is what we have had for the last 60 years.

PEDRO A. SANJUAN
Mount Vernon, New York

CLAUDIA ROSETT writes:

With the exception of Shashi Tharoor, who works for the UN, my correspondents agree with me that the UN is a corrupt and dysfunctional organization. What they question is whether the UN's virtues outweigh its vices, and what might be done about its drawbacks.

In fact, the issue is larger than that. In my article, I set out not simply to enumerate the UN's failings but to point to its troubling trajectory. Not only is today's UN corrupt and largely anti-democratic, but in adapting to the post-Soviet order it has become increasingly intrusive, unaccountable, and dangerous to free societies. The UN has been tapping not only public but private funding, signing on to special-interest partnerships (of which Saddam Hussein's graft-ridden commerce under Oil-for-Food was simply the most spectacular example), and exploiting its immunities and global reach in questionable ways, all while evading responsibility for the frequently abysmal results.

Let me begin by addressing Shashi Tharoor's richly illustrative letter. As head of the UN Department of Information, Mr. Tharoor oversees a staff of more than 700, spread throughout 100 countries worldwide, and enjoys an annual budget of $85 million, almost one-quarter of it funded by the U.S. taxpayer. It is perhaps too much to expect that he would be grateful for the role of outside investigations in exposing misconduct that his own department, despite its considerable resources, has variously dismissed or simply failed to note. But rather than acknowledging the scale and continuing nature of the problem, he instead blames others, omits crucial details, and exhorts people to recognize the UN's "many accomplishments" as advertised in a variety of places, "including, perhaps, the UN's own website."

Regarding the size of the UN budget and staff, I did not say, as Mr. Tharoor suggests, that there is no general information available. What I wrote was: "Nowhere does the UN present a full and clear set of accounts." And indeed, anyone consulting the UN website and public archives will find precious little insight into the most telling specifics. There is no detailed breakdown of actual spending, no clear explanation of what many of the accounts mean, and no intelligible set of books that would allow the public to see exactly who does what with the billions that flow annually through the UN system. Moreover, most reform proposals from the UN itself have focused on the "core" annual budget of $1.9 billion, rather than on the total budget, which is roughly ten times that size—or more, depending on how and what you count.

Thus, when Mr. Tharoor writes that the Secretariat's staff under the "regular" budget has been reduced by more than 25 percent since 1986, he is giving a carefully cropped version of the big picture. He acknowledges that for the entire system, "costs have grown to keep pace with the volume and complexity of the UN's work, which has increased exponentially since the body's founding in 1945." But he neglects to mention the proliferating roster of programs and trusts that receive far less public scrutiny than the Secretariat but are nevertheless entwined with it. For example, the Secretary-General oversees the channeling of assorted private contributions throughout the UN system and nominates or appoints the heads of such outfits beyond the Secretariat as the UN Environment Program and the UN Development Program.

In the matter of the Oil-for-Food scandal, Mr. Tharoor skips past the graft to repeat what has become the standard UN line: blaming the member states—the U.S. in particular—for allowing Saddam to engage in billions of dollars' worth of sanctions-busting oil smuggling in the period 1997-2003. Fair enough. All who knew about the smuggling should, indeed, have tried to stop it. But Mr. Tharoor fails to mention that the Secretary-General himself not only knew about the smuggling but actively abetted it, urging the Security Council to allow Saddam to revamp and expand his oil production. Here, from the UN's own records, is Kofi Annan's statement to the Security Council on March 24, 2000, as Saddam's smuggling was reaching record volumes: "Iraq's oil industry is seriously hampered by lack of spare parts and equipment, and this threatens to undermine the [Oil-for-Food] program's income in the long term. That is why I have repeatedly recommended a significant increase in the allocation of resources under the program for the purchase of spare parts for the oil industry." As a result of Annan's repeated urging, Saddam was able to re-equip himself to smuggle billions worth of oil not only to Jordan and Turkey but to terrorist-sponsoring Syria.

Further contradicting the UN's own records, Mr. Tharoor says it was not the job of the UN staff to prevent such smuggling—"they had neither the authority nor the resources." In fact, Secretary-General Annan had a $1.4 billion budget to administer and monitor Oil-for-Food. And a 1996 memorandum of understanding from the Security Council spelled out that to assist the UN sanctions committee, "the sale of petroleum and petroleum products originating in Iraq will be monitored by United Nations oil experts appointed by the Secretary-General."

All that, plus a great deal more, continues to vanish down the UN information department's memory hole. Mr. Tharoor assures the reader that the UN is accountable, noting that "The

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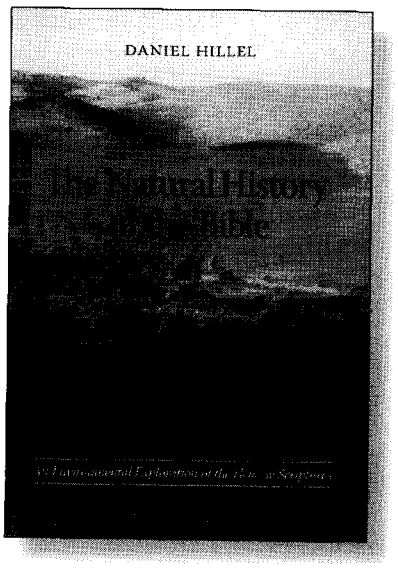

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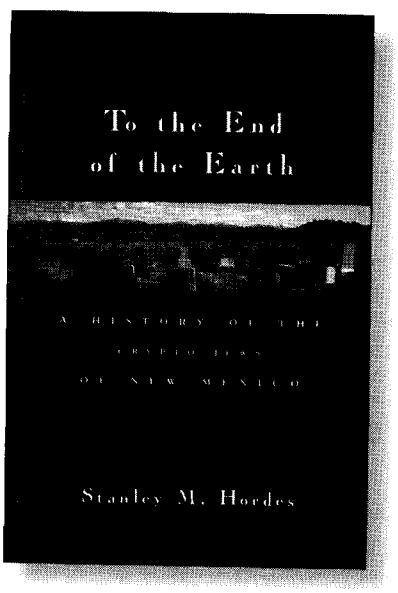

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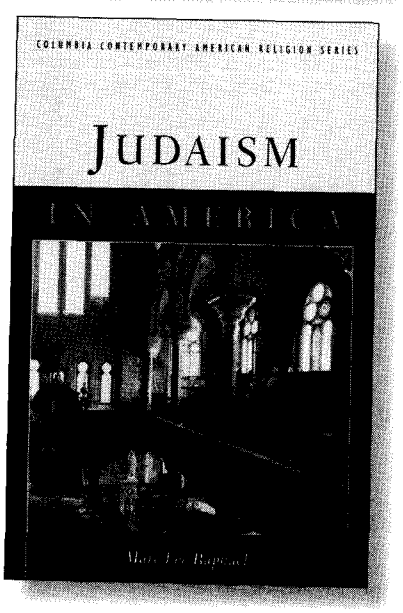

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Secretary-General has explicitly promised to lift the immunity of any staff member charged with a crime in the Oil-for-Food scandal." He neglects to mention that Annan's hand-picked director of Oil-for-Food, Benon Sevan, was alleged by the UN's own investigators to have taken payoffs in Saddam's oil deals. But instead of facing prosecution within the UN system, Sevan was allowed by Annan to slip away to Cyprus on full pension.

Mr. Tharoor at least acknowledges that the UN has had a problem of sexual abuse by its peacekeepers in Africa, "particularly in the Congo." He assures us that the Secretary-General has responded with a "zero tolerance" policy and remedial actions. But he fails to mention that the "exploitation" extended to pedophiliac rape, and that despite Kofi Annan's zero-tolerance response, similar abuses involving peacekeepers in Liberia have since been reported.

"The search for excellence is a constant effort," writes Mr. Tharoor, citing the Secretary-General's "new rules of ethical conduct." Lost on him is the irony that just this February, less than a month after installing an ethics office at the UN, Annan flew to Dubai to accept a $500,000 prize from the prime minister of the United Arab Emirates, a UN member state. A few weeks later, Annan promoted to the head of the UN Environment Program a member of the judges' panel that had tapped him for the prize. Only when this began to flare into yet another scandal in the press did Annan relinquish the money, announcing that he had decided to donate it to relief efforts in Sudan.

As for Mr. Tharoor's objection that I view "with jaundiced eyes Kofi Annan's efforts to expand contacts between the UN and civil society and the private sector," I would argue that it is problematic for any large government institution to start cutting deals with private patrons—all the more so when it comes to an institution as powerful and unaccountable as the UN. At any rate, Mr. Tharoor might be in a better position to argue his point had his own influential department not accepted, with a nod from Annan, at least $1.9 million in grants from Ted Turner's UN Foundation.

Turning to my other correspondents: David L. Bosco agrees with my account of the UN's "motley scandals and hypocrisies," but goes on to note that, despite its failings, the UN does employ some decent and selfless personnel who engage in such good works as immunization of the poor. True. But that leaves the question of why worthy programs and decent civil servants must function within the framework of a scandal-ridden, hypocritical, and shoddily-managed organization.

From there, Mr. Bosco moves to the realm of the nation-state, claiming that the UN Secretariat has "no choice" but to follow the orders of the member states dominating the Security Council. Blame, he concludes, must be fairly apportioned to them for the "failures of global governance." Yet, when it has wanted to, the Secretariat has shown itself to be very agile in avoiding domination by the Security Council. In the first place, as I noted in my article, Kofi Annan has accepted some $100 million per year since 1998 from Ted Turner's UN Foundation for projects that are approved and, in some cases, created and run by the Secretariat. In addition, as Paul Volcker's Oil-for-Food probe noted, the Secretariat's failure to report its abundant information about smuggling and kickbacks under Oil-for-Food "reveal[ed] a pattern of inaction and inadequate disclosure to the Security Council."

Finally, Mr. Bosco suggests that if I am outraged by "inaction in the face of genocide, Warren Christopher and Condoleezza Rice have mailing addresses." True again, but it is the UN that has had the budget, peacekeeping forces, and mantle of "international legitimacy" for dealing with crises in such places as Rwanda, Srebenica, Darfur, and beyond. Here, as with North Korea or Iran, the UN does not just fail to act, it gets in the way. If the U.S. State Department is where one ought to lobby, would it not make sense to remove the UN from the equation altogether?

Grappling more gamely with the practicalities, Nicholas Rostow notes that the UN's founding vision is "mocked" by too many of its present-day realities. Still he looks for signs of hope, citing action on terrorism since September 11, the UN's role in evicting Syria from Lebanon, and the "catalytic Security Council meeting in Nairobi in 2004" meant to bring peace to Sudan. Mr. Rostow finds in these examples more cause for optimism than I would think warranted. In each instance, the UN contributed more to incubating the problem than to solving it.

In deference to the despots and terror-sponsors of the Middle East, the UN has a long record of refusing even to define terrorism, let alone attempting to stop it. Even today, while the UN can boast of various counterterrorist measures on paper, some of the most prominent figures on the UN-designated terror list remain at large because the relevant member states will not act, and the UN does not penalize them. Meanwhile, states like Syria and Iran enjoy their seats at the UN table, and the UN ponders and dithers while Iran's president flaunts his nuclear projects and threatens to annihilate Israel.

As for the withdrawal last year of Syria's occupying army from Lebanon, the Lebanese protesters who began turning out in force in February 2005 to demand that Syria depart were not only driven by the assassination of their former prime minister, Rafik Hariri, but inspired by news of the Iraqi turnout at the polls the previous month. That crack in the bedrock of Middle Eastern despotism came as a result of the U.S.-led overthrow of Saddam, which the UN opposed, and which Kofi Annan condemned as "illegal." The UN deserves credit for taking a long overdue hint from the U.S. and telling Syria to get out of Lebanon, and for launching an investigation into Hariri's murder. But the murder investigation drags on, Syria's Baathist regime remains in power, imposing misery on its own people and providing a corridor of terror running from Iran to the borders of Israel.

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THE ISSUE

Redefining Sovereignty

THE INCOMPREHENSIBLE

The United States May Surrender Its Sovereignty

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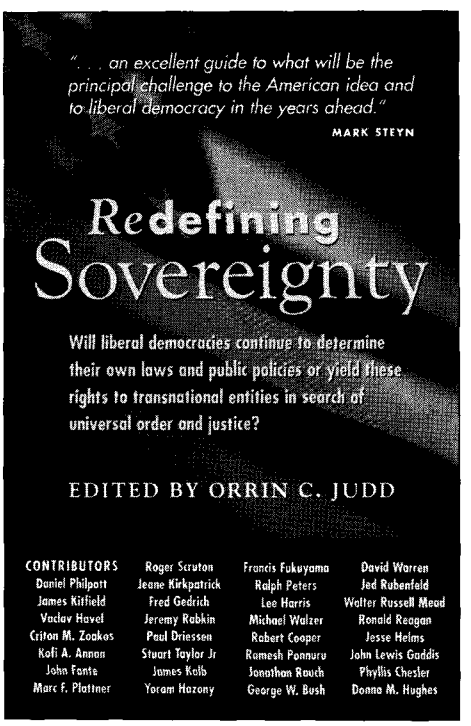

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Likewise, whatever the impetus provided by the UN meeting held in Nairobi in 2004, the genocide in Sudan continues—a genocide that Annan at the time could not bring himself to name as such. Sudan, during the intervening two years, enjoyed a seat on the UN Human Rights Commission—now reformed into the not exactly improved Human Rights Council and hosting members such as China, Cuba, Russia, and Saudi Arabia.

Mr. Rostow concludes, rightly enough, that the Secretariat needs a new culture and that the General Assembly needs to break with its past. Unfortunately, despite all the talk of reform, there is no concrete sign that the UN is willing or even able to undertake the necessary steps. Mr. Rostow's wisest observation comes at the end of his letter, where he writes that the realities of the body are such that we and others must "sometimes seek alternatives to the UN in addressing urgent problems of the day."

Hillel C. Neuer, by contrast, is more clear-eyed about the UN's failings but perhaps overly pessimistic about the prospects for working around it. He argues that in defending the values of Western civilization, the U.S. is stuck with the European Union, which "remains an ardent supporter of the UN"—ergo, we are stuck with the UN. By the same reasoning, the U.S. was stuck for years with European appeasement of an imperial Soviet Union. But President Reagan was able to turn the tide by demonstrating leadership.

Pedro A. Sanjuan spent ten years in the belly of the UN Secretariat, and has recently accomplished the remarkable feat of writing a book about the UN that is at once entertaining, richly informed, and right on target. In *The UN Gang*, Mr. Sanjuan argues that not only has the UN failed to live up to its mission to enhance international cooperation, but it has been configured in such a way as to be a prime cause of trouble. What has changed since Mr. Sanjuan's stint at Turtle Bay is mainly that the body has grown in size and scope. Unless we start seriously seeking viable alternatives to it, worse trouble lies ahead.

Dealing with Iran

TO THE EDITOR:

In his article, "Three Reasons Not to Bomb Iran—Yet" [May], Edward N. Luttwak looks at Iran not merely through the prism of the current crisis but also from a long-term perspective. He rightly argues that, in fashioning its policies, the U.S. should ask what kind of Iran it wishes to see in the future, and how this can be realized.

This issue is not new. The "Persian question" preoccupied Great Britain for a century-and-a-half. Indeed, the classic British attitude toward Iran is much closer to the American position today than is Mr. Luttwak's romanticized vision of a "natural" U.S.-Iran alliance that supposedly once existed and can be reestablished if Iranians were only freed from the rule of the mullahs.

Britain wanted Iran to be a weak buffer state to prevent Russia's advance into the Indian subcontinent. The U.S. has had the same basic attitude. Even at the height of U.S.-Iran relations, after the 1953 coup d'etat, the U.S. provided the Shah's government with a paltry amount of aid as compared, say, with what it provided Nasser's Egypt. The U.S. never signed a comprehensive security agreement with Iran, and valued the country only as an export market, a client, and a buffer, not as an ally like Turkey or Saudi Arabia. In the 1970's, when the Shah demanded to be treated like an ally, America came to see him as a liability, a view that helped shape events in the time leading up to the Islamic revolution there.

With the collapse of the Soviet Union, Iran's value as a buffer disappeared. Its position between the Persian Gulf and the Caspian Sea and its natural and human resources made it more of a headache and potential rival than a potential ally. This would have been the case even if it had had a secular regime, since the real cause was the inherent tension in relations between a global power and a potential regional power. Moreover, threats to Iran now no longer emanated from Russia but from the irredentist claims of some of its neighbors.

Mr. Luttwak's analysis of Iran's ethnic and sectarian problems is also faulty. One major problem arises from his confusion, widely shared in the West, between "Iran" and "Persia." Contrary to popular belief, Iran has always been called just that. Reza Shah did not change the country's name but merely demanded that Western countries refer to it properly. By the same token, "Iranians" consist of various Indo–Iranian groups that settled in Iran. Many of the groups that Mr. Luttwak sees as minorities alienated from the regime in fact consider Iranian-ness their defining quality.

Thus, it is simply not true that Iranian Azerbaijanis see the Republic of Azerbaijan as their natural home; they have long been fully integrated within Iranian society and the polity, with only some linguistic demands that could be accommodated in a more democratic Iran. Also, Iran's treatment of its Sunnis does not include denouncing them as infidels who should be killed, as the Wahhabis in Saudi Arabia and their disciples in places like Pakistan say of Shiites. Indeed, this kind of false talk about Iran only consolidates internal support for the regime as the only barrier to Iran's disintegration and weakens democratic forces.

There are many reasons why the U.S. should not bomb Iran—now or later—not least that all of its neighbors are vulnerable to the disruptive forces that an attack would unleash. An attack would also doom forever the U.S.-Iranian alliance that Mr. Luttwak hopes for, irrespective of the nature of the regime that came to power. The U.S. needs another approach to dealing with its "Persian question." Talking with Iran would be a good start.

SHIREEN HUNTER
Center for Strategic and International Studies
Washington, D.C.

TO THE EDITOR:

Edward N. Luttwak has long been one of America's premier counterstrategists, going where more timid analysts fear to tread and hav-

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JERUSALEM ISSUE BRIEFS

Europe's Response to the Threat of Global Terror

JOSE MARIA AZNAR, FORMER PRIME MINISTER OF SPAIN

The new mission of NATO should be clear: to combat *jihadism* and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. NATO should invite Japan, Australia, and Israel to become full members. The West cannot fight this radical tide without Israel.

The Basis of the U.S.-Israel Alliance: An Israeli Response to the Mearsheimer-Walt Assault

DORE GOLD

On December 27, 1962, President John F. Kennedy told Israeli Foreign Minister Golda Meir: "The United States has a special relationship with Israel in the Middle East really comparable only to what it has with Britain over a wide range of world affairs." The U.S. Marine Corps and special operations forces have particularly benefited from these ties, though much of the U.S.-Israel strategic relationship is classified.

JERUSALEM VIEWPOINTS

Understanding the Direction of the New Hamas Government: Between Tactical Pragmatism and Al-Qaeda Jihadism

LT. COL. (RES.) JONATHAN D. HALEVI

Hamas views its political mission as the vanguard of the world-wide Islamic revolution led by its parent-movement, the Muslim Brotherhood. Hamas' rise to power has inspired Islamic movements all over the world, especially in Jordan. In addition, the Palestinian Authority under Hamas rule is becoming a safe haven for Islamic terror organizations, first and foremost al-Qaeda.

Al-Qaeda, Zarqawi, and Israel: Is There a New Jihadi Threat Destabilizing the Eastern Front?

DORE GOLD AND LT. COL. (RES.) JONATHAN D. HALEVI

Groups identifying with al-Qaeda — or the global *jihad* — are determined to acquire operational footholds close to Israel's borders, as al-Qaeda operations around Israel are becoming more prominent. Were Israel to withdraw from the strategic barrier it controls in the Jordan Valley, Israeli vulnerability could attract global *jihadi* elements, who would seek to use Jordan as a platform to reach the West Bank and then Israel.

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When Israel disengaged from the Gaza Strip, it did not seek a quid-pro-quo from the Palestinians but rather from the U.S., in the form of a presidential letter. Israel's rights and requirements for defensible borders, as proposed by President George W. Bush, have now been placed squarely on the global diplomatic agenda. This multi-disciplinary study focuses on Israel's minimal territorial requirements to enable it to defend itself in the post-Iraq War Middle East.

The Autumn 2005 Riots in France: Their Possible Impact on Israel and the Jews

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Many profound problems that came to the fore during the French riots also exist, in somewhat different form, in several other Western European countries. Many in France and other European countries are becoming increasingly insecure about their future.

Human Rights of Christians in Palestinian Society

JUSTUS REID WEINER

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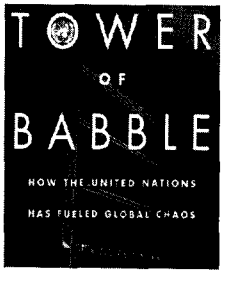

The UN was originally created in 1945 to halt aggression and safeguard human rights. But it has utterly failed at its mission, particularly in the 1990s when it repeatedly failed to stop acts of genocide, and expedited global chaos. Newly-expanded paperback just released with previously undisclosed "oil-for-food" details.

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ing no truck with groupthink. He correctly urges us to understand the folly of bombing Iran—at least now. What better way to rally Iranians around their quixotic president, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, than to bomb their homeland?

Mr. Luttwak also argues correctly that a world in which Iran has a nuclear bomb would be a dangerous place. Indeed, the case can be made that even a "reformed" Iranian government with nuclear capability would present grave risks. He is also surely right in his analysis that Tehran is still far from getting the bomb. This raises the question why the Bush administration has rushed Iran policy to the front burner now, despite a potentially significant cost to American prestige and standing—and even to our alliances, if other countries will not follow our lead in trying to force Tehran immediately to alter course.

Is Mr. Luttwak's hope that the regime will crumble before genuine peril emerges from its nuclear program reasonable? Perhaps. But already, in the Bush administration and among much of the American elite, the issue is solidly sunk in concrete: Iran is perforce up to no good, it is about to "pass the point of no return," and the only matter left in doubt is the best means to stop it—sanctions or, if need be, bombing. Similar reasoning helped lead us into Iraq, but that experience has had no chastening effect on the debate over Iran.

We need to follow Mr. Luttwak's strategic reasoning a step further. He says that the U.S. and Iran are once and future allies, but he stops short of endorsing the pursuit of a different relationship with Iran. He does not explore the issues, beyond prestige—and Iran is a prestige-sensitive culture—that provoke countries to acquire nuclear weapons. In contrast to our dealings with North Korea, we have been unwilling to pledge not to attack Iran were it to become squeaky clean on nuclear issues—an offer that almost all Iranians would want their narrow leadership to accept. We did not even acknowledge credible feelers from Tehran in 2003 for a "grand bargain" along these lines.

Let us take one final step. Unless we want to be mired in the Middle East indefinitely, the U.S. needs to start work on a new strategic framework for the region. It is imperative that we set priorities, make choices, and look for common interests—even if possible partners look like the devil. A generation ago, to help get us out of Vietnam, a U.S. President called up one devil (China) in order to deal with another (the Soviet Union). If he were President today, Richard Nixon would likely be "going to Tehran" to deal with the mess in Iraq.

ROBERT E. HUNTER
RAND Corporation
Washington, D.C.

TO THE EDITOR:

I have long been a reader of Edward N. Luttwak's strategic writings, and have recommended them to many, including my students at West Point. But I find myself in disagreement with him on the subject of American strategy toward Iran and its nuclear program.

Early on in his article, Mr. Luttwak asserts that "smart weapons" could inflict enough damage so that in "a single night of bombing," and with minimal collateral damage, Iran's nuclear program would be "interrupted in lasting ways." This reflects an unrealistic faith in the dependability and accuracy of the weapons. Their performance in recent wars does not support the claims of their manufacturers that they have revolutionized warfare. Chaos theory and Murphy's postulate that "whatever can go wrong, will go wrong" remain applicable to warfare, a human endeavor involving countless variables and the interactions of people gripped by fear and uncertainty.

It is evident that the Iranian nuclear program could be set back for a considerable period by air attack, but it seems clear that the effort would involve a major campaign and at least 1,000 strike sorties by aircraft and missiles. In the nature of things, planes will fail to reach their targets, weapons will miss, re-strikes will be necessary, etc. Excessive cleverness in attempting to target any complex system inevitably leads to a reliance on too few resources to do the job well. Iraq should be a stark reminder of that.

Mr. Luttwak further asserts that Iran and the U.S. are "natural allies" because Iran needs protection from Russia and America needs to keep Iran's coastline out of the reach of "troublemakers" who could threaten the "weak and corrupt desert dynasties" on the other side of the Persian Gulf. He believes it will not be much longer before the progressive, pro-American Iranians shake off the bonds of the "mullocracy" that has been in power since the revolution, and set the country on a path toward modernization. Having been "oppressed" for so long by theocracy, the Iranian "people" will reject traditional Islamic rule and embrace behaviors and institutions alien to their ancestral ways, and all will be well.

This sounds remarkably like the vision of Iraqi society that was embraced by the Bush administration before our intervention there. There, too, the expectation was that if the "nation" was released from the bonds of tyranny and Oriental obscurantism, the country would embrace Western-style government, the civil servants would show up for work (unless they were Baathists), and the tendency of many Iraqis to think of themselves primarily as members of ethno-religious communities would atrophy.

But as with Iraq, the evidence from Iran runs the other way. There are no discernible revolutionary movements there. The much-vaunted expectation of a youth revolution that was to be manifested in the last general election never materialized. Instead, a medieval fanatic, representative of the most extreme elements of the Islamic revolution, became president, and he does not appear to be concerned about the stability of his position.

There is nothing in present Iranian behavior that supports Mr. Luttwak's contention that inside most Iranian breasts there are feelings of friendship toward America waiting to emerge. If there are Iranian voices opposed to the nuclear ambitions of their country, I have yet to hear them.

W. PATRICK LANG
Alexandria, Virginia

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TO THE EDITOR:

I fully concur with Edward N. Luttwak's position that the U.S. should not bomb Iran, but I find myself in disagreement with some of the premises of his thoughtful article.

First, a few minor points of history. Contrary to what Mr. Luttwak writes, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad is not the "first non-cleric to win Iran's presidency." That honor belongs to Iran's first president, Bani-Sadr, who was duly impeached when he dared to challenge the rising power of the clergy.

Also, in his brief description of the Iranian nuclear program, Mr. Luttwak falls into the trap of accepting the self-serving narrative of the mullahs. They claim that the U.S. has a double standard when it comes to uranium enrichment and Iran's "peaceful" nuclear program. The U.S., it is said, encouraged and aided the Shah's nuclear ambitions, but is now putting obstacles before the mullah's program. In fact, as soon as it realized that the Shah had been coveting the full enrichment cycle, the U.S. discreetly but forcefully pressured him to cease and desist.

The mullahs have a single-minded obsession: to stay in power. For them, the nuclear program is not so much deterrence against outside forces (as Mr. Luttwak suggests) as it is insurance against Iran's indigenous democratic movement. The bomb, the mullahs think, will make them impervious to internal pressure.

In stating the reasons why the U.S. should not yet attack Iran, Mr. Luttwak fails to point out two crucial facts about the domestic Iranian situation. First, there are now serious fissures emerging within the ruling elite about the wisdom of the nuclear program and of Ahamadinejad's confrontational tactics. An attack would simply help unite the otherwise fractured leadership.

Second, and more important, there is in Iran a viable democratic movement. It is now more dormant than in the past, but recent massive demonstrations in Tehran and other major cities have shown that it could come to life at any moment. An American or Israeli attack on the country would sound the death knell of this movement. The nuclear threat, as well as the larger war on terror and radical Islam, can only be won if the silent, prudent, and moderate middle classes of the Muslim world rise up against these scourges. An attack on Iran today is sure to force these crucial forces of moderation into even more prolonged and dangerous silence.

ABBAS MILANI
Iran Democracy Project
Hoover Institution
Stanford, California

TO THE EDITOR:

Edward N. Luttwak argues that we should wait to take military action against Iran because the incompetent and unpopular fanatics running the country will eventually lose power. This misses the obvious counterexample of Castro's Cuba, a country whose government is at least as incompetent and unpopular, but which has outlived so many predictions over the decades of its imminent collapse. Iran, with its vast energy reserves, has far more resources with which to fund its army and maintain its hold over the population.

Mr. Luttwak says that military action would only help the Iranian regime present itself as an underdog. But the fact is that most of Iran's neighbors (not just Israel) are terrified of the prospect of an Iranian bomb. In any case, fear of angering the Muslim/Arab street is a tired argument, and should not be a barrier to acting on such a vital concern.

Finally, Mr. Luttwak is skeptical that Iran has the technical wherewithal to produce nuclear weapons. But one need only look at the example of North Korea to see that where there is a will there is a way, even in backward countries. Pakistan, India, and China all developed the bomb before achieving any general national level of scientific proficiency. We simply cannot know for sure what Iran has or has not achieved.

GUY GOLDBERG
Princeton, New Jersey

EDWARD N. LUTTWAK writes:

I have only a few disagreements with Shireen Hunter's interesting observations.

One is that, notwithstanding the absence of any security treaty—an absence she rightly notes—in the two cold-war periods when Iran did face an authentic strategic threat from the Soviet Union, the United States did not abandon it but on the contrary stood ready to defend it vigorously. In 1946, the U.S. did for Iran what, for example, it refused to do for Poland or Czechoslovakia, i.e., extrude an already implanted Russian presence. Then, in the 1970's, as I know from my own personal participation, structural innovations were introduced into the U.S. Army—the 7th Light Infantry Division survives to this day—specifically to defend Iran, in the event of a Soviet invasion, by an innovative combination of mountain warfare and air power. So it is not right to dismiss the notion of a congruence of fundamental security interests as a "romantic vision": there was politically risky diplomacy in 1946, and elaborate military preparation of the most concrete sort in the 1970's.

Nor need Shireen Hunter worry about a confusion on my part between Persia and Iran, or for that matter among Persia, Parthia, and Iran. Actually, there has never been any confusion on the part of anyone with a passing interest in their history. While the Achaemenid empire, eventually defeated by Alexander the Great, was known as Persian to Greek-speakers, they knew full well that Persia (Persis to them) was only one of its many satrapies. Similarly the Romans who fought the Arsacid Parthian dynasty (ruled from Mesopotamia) knew that Parthia (Ashkanian) far to the northeast was only its original province.

It was the Sasanian (or, to Hellenize, Sassanid) rulers in their long battle with the Byzantine empire who first eschewed original associations to claim Iran (Eran, or Eranshahr, domain of the Eranians or Aryans) as their territory, in line with their assertion of a more ancient and more glorious imperial role than that proclaimed by their Arsacid predecessors. From then until now, "Iran" has defined the core of an often much larger imperial territory (the Iranian plateau), while the adjective "Persian" has continued to apply to the language and

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arts of the dominant metropolitan culture. In the West, without any real confusion, "Persia" has merely served as loose short-hand for the greater entity, in a manner analogous to the use of "England" to mean Great Britain, or even the United Kingdom.

Things become more serious when Shireen Hunter dismisses the different nationalisms that will sooner or later change the map, replacing today's Iran with a distinctly smaller but more cohesive Persian-language state. Hers is a familiar metropolitan delusion. It was the same with the Germans of 1848 who simply would not believe that Czechs would ever want an inferior, provincial state of their own, and would even go so far as to claim German Prague for its capital. Again, in Moscow not very long ago, it was people of Ukrainian origin who were most emphatic in dismissing the possibility that Ukrainians would ever want to separate under their own flag, merely because of some minor linguistic differences that did not even apply to most inhabitants of eastern Ukraine.

However strongly felt, such sentiments are still delusions, while nationalist separatism is the reality abundantly manifest everywhere. Unconsciously echoing more or less the exact words of her predecessors in the same delusion, Shireen Hunter writes:

> Many of the groups that Mr. Luttwak sees as minorities alienated from the regime in fact consider Iranian-ness their defining quality. Thus, it is simply not true that Iranian Azerbaijanis see the Republic of Azerbaijan as their natural home; they have long been fully integrated within Iranian society and the polity, with only some linguistic demands that could be accommodated in a more democratic Iran.

Since reading her words, I have seen the news reports of overwhelming mass demonstrations in the city of Tabriz, with its 1.2 million mostly Azeri inhabitants, as well as in many other localities. The slogans in Tabriz included: "Independence or Death" and "Tabriz, Capital of United Azerbaijan." I have no doubt that among the twenty million and more Azeris in Iran, there are many who are thoroughly assimilated and have no interest in separatism; plenty of people of Ukrainian origin are content to remain Russians in Russia, just as Czech names are common in Vienna. But those who live in Azeri-majority areas in northwest Iran evidently think otherwise. And while they would not want to be ruled by the much smaller number of their compatriots in the Republic of Azerbaijan, they would be happy to rule *them* in a united Azerbaijan.

There are now many organizations active among the Azeris in Iran, with support groups throughout Europe and North America; I have at my fingertips a list of three dozen or more. Nor do the Iranian authorities, for their part, seem to share the metropolitan delusion: according to reports in the Turkish press, they have placed Azeri military officers under surveillance, and are implementing other (futile) security measures.

Among other ethno-linguistic groups in Iran, some do, as Shireen Hunter writes, identify themselves as fully Iranian, even if they speak a different tongue (defined by linguists as a language, not a dialect). These include the Gilakis and Mazandaranis. But this is emphatically not true of the Kurds, against whom the government must now use field artillery; of the Arabs, who place bombs in Ahwaz and have no further use for Iran now that next-door Iraq is no longer ruled by Sunnis; of the Baluch, who are fiercely fighting for their own state across Iran and Pakistan; or now of the Azeris, who—unlike Kurds, Arabs, and Baluch—are not peripheral and who amount to almost a third of Iran's total population. It was indeed inevitable that exasperated religion would foment secularism in Iran, and that long-standing Persian supremacist tendencies, accentuated in recent decades, would energize the separatist forces that will reduce Iran to its Persian and "Iranic" core, peacefully or otherwise.

With regard to W. Patrick Lang's two points, I would claim only that to fly 1,000 sorties against the mostly non-flying Iranian air force and obsolete missile defenses would be to flog dead horses egregiously, and that medium-altitude delivery of precision weapons of choice would negate anti-aircraft artillery (guns being simpler affairs than missiles, they are more likely to work and, if aimed manually, are proof against electronic countermeasures). As for the sentiments lurking in Iranian breasts, I can make no such confident assertion, but what I hear from visitors, unanimously, is that years of the regime's anti-Americanism have induced an almost uncritical pro-Americanism, just as one would expect.

For the rest, I appreciate the points made by my other correspondents, but I still believe that we should neither attack Iran now nor allow it to attain nuclear weapons.

Yale 1968

TO THE EDITOR:

Phillip M. Richards's thoughtful recollections of his time at Yale describe clashing black and white cultures amid decaying academic standards and social values ["Black and Blue at Yale—A Memoir," April]. His 1968 vantage point coincided with the counterculture youth movement's overreaching itself in violence and self-indulgence. Focusing on that historical juncture, however, diverts attention from the deep restructuring of American identities during the black and feminist movements, which affected all institutions. In the summer of 1968, black soldiers like myself agonized over standby orders to quell the urban uprisings of dispossessed blacks. In 1969, I entered the University of Illinois and witnessed higher education's still-ongoing transformation toward democratic inclusion.

Rejecting black subordination and white privilege, baby-boomers struggled with the internal demons created by their childhood socialization in pre-civil-rights America. Blacks felt shamed by racial stigmas and previous generations' acquiescence in Jim Crow; whites bore the guilt of the

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generations that had allowed the repression. Each confronted ugly stereotypes made salient by grossly unequal education and employment opportunities. The surprise of Mr. Richards's white classmates at his classroom prowess was one side of the apartheid coin; the flipside of presumed black intellectual inferiority was revealed to me by the visible pleasure my black classmates took at my ability to meet a professor's challenge that the white students could not.

Expurgating social demons, we sometimes stumbled. Some guilt-ridden whites capitulated to unreasonable demands from blacks demanding redress; whites in denial saw no merit in any black demand for equality. In his envy for the supposedly "balanced" African-American Rhodes Scholar fencer who distanced himself from other blacks, Mr. Richards fails to see the pathology in evading one's blackness that he sees in others' search for a mystical black essence.

Fleeing shame, blacks made sincere attempts to create identities that they thought were consonant with ancestral Africa. The quest for an "authentic" African-American self bestowed near absolute supremacy on cultural nationalism. This was the high period of dashiki wearing and afro hair-styles. I was a twenty-two-year-old Vietnam veteran who was self-assured enough to develop white and black friendships. Younger undergraduates self-segregated themselves. The race to be the blackest of blacks made it a liability to have white friends, light skin, straight hair, and standard speech. The most extreme cultural nationalists, proclaiming "black is beautiful" and demanding black studies, were light-skinned brothers and sisters sporting afros the height of African ant hills.

It was cultural nationalism that bequeathed black studies to the academy. Intellectually honest blacks like Kenneth Clark and the Nobel laureate economist Sir Arthur Lewis criticized these programs, often on point. Curricula designed with input from twenty-year-olds in identity crises were frequently weak. I viewed the fledgling black-studies program at the University of Illinois as a frivolous feel-good indulgence and avoided it.

But things quickly improved. Today, the black-studies program at Illinois boasts excellent faculty and, like the vast majority of such programs, has a strong curriculum. Most of the programs are disliked by the cultural nationalists. At Mr. Richards's alma mater, where I teach, careful planning has helped avoid many pitfalls. Before he graduated, the faculty included English professor Charles Davis, art historian Robert Thompson, and the rising historian John Blassingame. Soon a visiting Sir Arthur Lewis and I co-taught a course in urban economic development, and Lewis publicly retracted his earlier assessment of black studies. By the 80's, Yale students interested in black studies could take courses with professors like K. Anthony Appiah, Hazel Carby, Henry Louis Gates, Jr., Edmund Gordon, Bell Hooks, Adolph Reed, Robert B. Stepto, and Cornel West, among others.

Race relations remain problematic throughout America, but (in contrast to Mr. Richards's days on campus) hardly a Yale student takes much notice of interracial friendships these days. About those dead white men rumored to be banned from the academy—we still read them, and live ones too. Thanks to the 60's, when I teach W.E.B. Du Bois, I also teach Hegel, and my students and I learn more from both.

GERALD JAYNES
Yale University
New Haven, Connecticut

PHILLIP M. RICHARDS writes:

Gerald Jaynes offers some suggestive formulations and autobiographical notes in response to my own, and raises some important questions. The late 1960's and early 70's did indeed see a transformation in black identity, a transformation that complicated the university's secondary role of socializing students for American life, especially in its higher echelons. In taking on the task of educating large numbers of black students, Yale was forced to confront the issue of what it meant to be "black and blue."

On campuses throughout America, the task of socialization has shadowed increased African-American participation in academic life in general and in black studies in particular. Black professors, whatever their inclinations, find themselves cast as mentors to African-American students and junior colleagues. But the political and even therapeutic roles often assumed by the black professoriate can put pressure on their role as intellectual guides.

Even at an elite school like Yale, intellectual development often demands a kind of involvement with the wider campus that, given the norms of modern African-American bourgeois life, may be seen as "non-black" or as an evasion of "blackness." Mr. Jaynes illustrates this problem when he portrays his own admirably mature progress through the University of Illinois as in some sense exemplary while rejecting as pathological the experience of my "balanced" Rhodes Scholar classmate. As he sees it, the style and success with which my classmate engaged in academic and social activities at Yale was an unacceptable deviation from black social norms.

As academic and social instructors, black intellectuals must learn to accept their black students' variegated patterns of success, even those patterns that are not identifiably "black." In the meantime, intellectually engaged black students may have to practice some very rugged individualism if they are to find themselves.

Clearly, the norms associated with "healthy" and "deviant" blackness can also seep into academic work itself, especially in the humanities. In my recent book, *Black Heart: The Moral Life of Recent African-American Letters*, I show how this has happened in black academic literary culture. The black humanist's move into the newly integrated academy takes him into identity politics—a dangerous sphere toward which we should all be a little warier.

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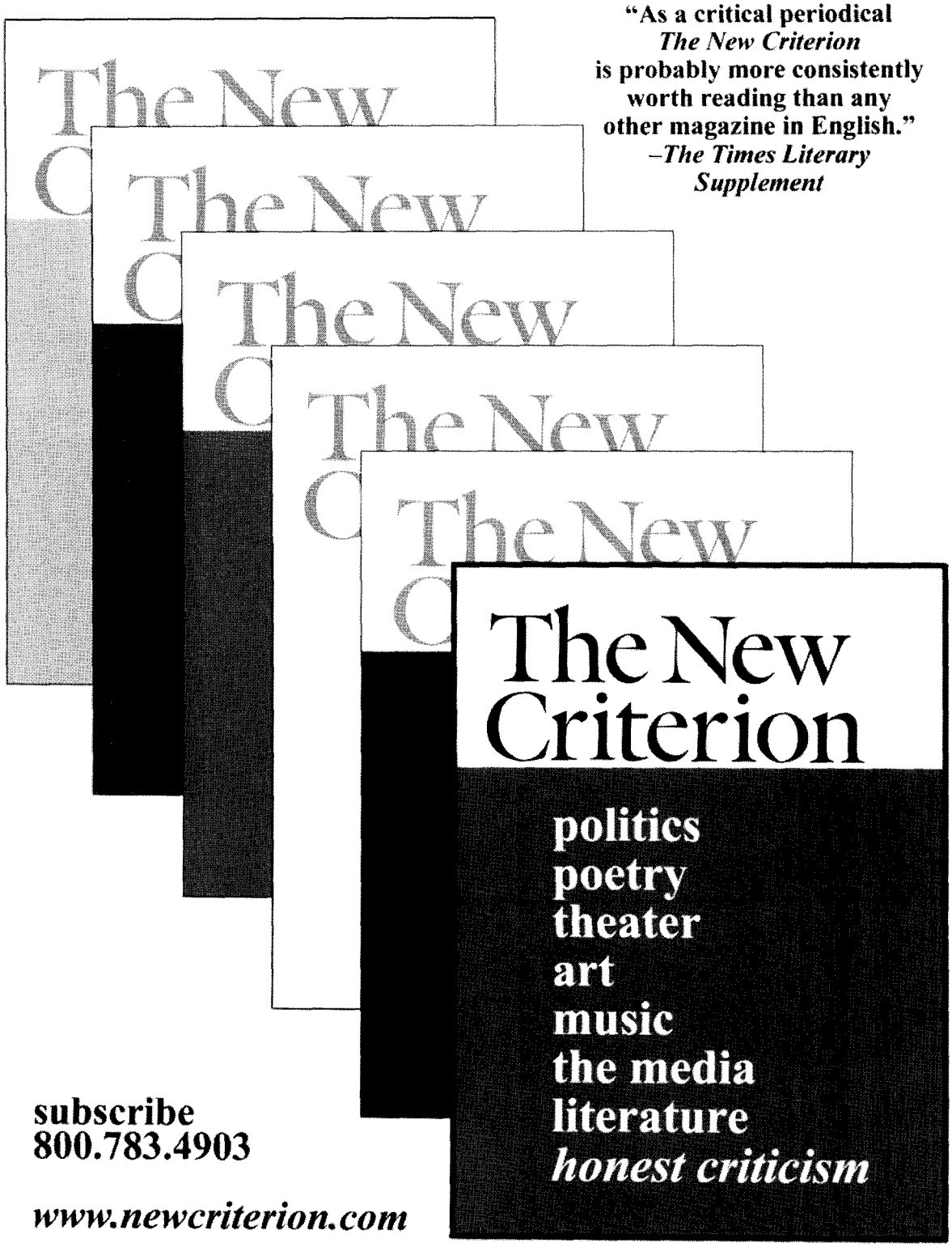

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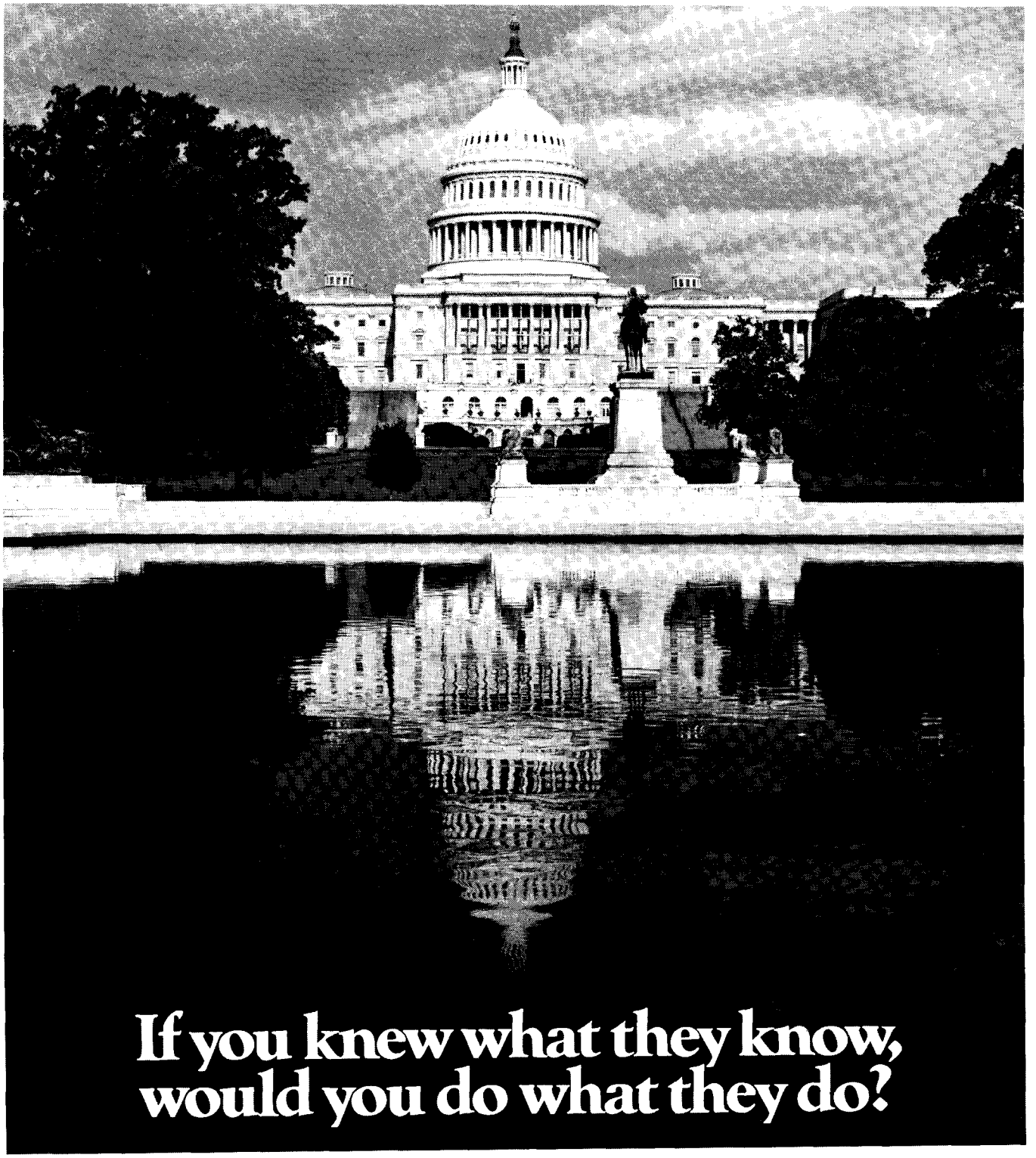

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Of Pills and Profits: In Defense of Big Pharma

Peter W. Huber

THE MORE our health depends on their little pills, the more we seem to hate big drug companies. In *The Constant Gardener* (2000), John le Carré assigns to the pharmaceutical industry the role played by the KGB in his earlier novels. A villainous pharmaceutical company is using Kenya as a testing ground for a lethally defective drug, and people who find out about it die, too. Four recent, non-fiction indictments of the industry tell a similar story.* Conflating the four into one, one might title them collectively *How Big Pharma Deceives, Endangers, and Rips Us Off, with the Complicity of Doctors.*

Two of these books are by former editors of the prestigious *New England Journal of Medicine*. Slamming the drug companies, Marcia Angell argues that Big Pharma, as it has come to be called, "uses its wealth and power to co-opt every institution that might stand in its way, including the U.S. Congress, the Food and Drug Administration, academic medical centers, and the medical profession itself." Slamming the medical profession, academics, and professional organizations, Jerome P. Kassirer, Angell's former boss, labels them Big Pharma's "whores."

The bill of particulars, drawn from the books cited above, goes something like this. Most of what people believe about Big Pharma is just "mythology spun by the industry's immense public-relations apparatus." Forget miracle drugs—Big Pharma is not a "research-based industry," it is "an idea-licensing, pharmaceutical-formulating-and-manufacturing, clinical-testing, patenting, and marketing industry." As for "the few innovative drugs that do come to market," these "nearly always stem from publicly supported research" or are developed by small biotech firms. Big Pharma simply goes "trolling small companies all over the world for drugs to license." At most tweaking the chemistry of drugs developed by others, it advances medicine by "waiting for Godot."

Moreover, these me-too drugs "usually target very common lifelong conditions—like arthritis or depression or high blood pressure or elevated cholesterol." Many just aren't needed, because older drugs already work as well or better, or because the new drugs are peddled to people who aren't sick. Big Pharma is thus "primarily a marketing machine to sell drugs of dubious benefit."

All the while, the industry neglects many essential drugs that treat uncommon diseases, transient conditions, or lethal conditions, or that provide im-

PETER W. HUBER *is a senior fellow of the Manhattan Institute. His contributions to* COMMENTARY *include "Telecom Undone—A Cautionary Tale" (January 2003), "Guns, Tobacco, Big Macs—and the Courts" (June 1999), and, with Mark P. Mills, "Getting Over Oil" (September 2005).*

* *The Truth About the Drug Companies: How They Deceive Us and What To Do About It* by Marcia Angell (Random House, 319 pp., $24.95). *On the Take: How Medicine's Complicity with Big Business Can Endanger Your Health* by Jerome P. Kassirer (Oxford, 251 pp., $30.00). *The Big Fix: How the Pharmaceutical Industry Rips Off American Consumers* by Katharine Greider (Public Affairs, 189 pp., $14.00). *Big Pharma: Exposing the Global Healthcare Agenda* by Jacky Law (Carroll & Graf, 266 pp., $15.95).

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munity or quick, complete cures. Thus, in 2001 alone, there were "serious shortages" of certain anesthetics, anti-venoms, steroids for premature infants, antidotes for certain drug overdoses, an anti-clotting drug for hemophilia, an injectable drug used in cardiac resuscitation, an antibiotic for gonorrhea, a drug to induce labor in childbirth, and, worst of all, childhood vaccines. In general, the industry is "supremely uninterested" in tropical diseases and other afflictions of the very poor. We get Viagra. They get malaria.

Then there is the pricing—always the pricing. Big Pharma's defenders claim that research-and-development costs for a new drug can approach $2 billion, necessitating high prices. But about half of that is spent wooing legislators, regulators, academics, expert review boards, medical journals, doctors, patients, insurers, and jurors. The money is wasted, or worse. "[T]ruly good drugs don't have to be promoted very much." "A genuinely important new drug . . . sells itself."

Even subtracting the costs of flacking, the expense of developing a new drug does not run anywhere near $1 billion. Typically, according to Angell, drug companies spend under $500 million. Their accountants then double the number on the baseless theory that a dollar spent today must earn two dollars (or so) when the drug is finally sold in 2016. But since Big Pharma licenses from others the drugs that matter, and licenses them cheaply at that, its real up-front costs per drug are more like $100 to $300 million than $1 billion.

In sum, Big Pharma ignores the drugs that matter, wastes huge amounts of money corrupting the market, and passes on the cost to patients. Especially to Americans: drug companies "price their drugs much higher here than in other markets," thereby contributing to today's "yawning chasm" between rich and poor.

The solution? Starve the fever. We should curb "commercial imperatives," shorten the time span of drug patents and narrow their terms, and sharply limit Big Pharma's dealings with clinical researchers, doctors, and patients. Opening the industry's accounts to the public, we should require that drug prices be both "reasonable" and "as uniform as possible for all purchasers." Big Pharma should be seen as akin to a "public utility," and regulated accordingly.

So runs the indictment. Now for a story. In an April 2005 obituary, the *New York Times* described Maurice Hilleman as the man who "probably saved more lives than any other scientist in the 20th century." What kind of genius does it take to get that on your tombstone? Hilleman himself, it seems, "credited much of his success to his boyhood work with chickens." He went on to use fertilized chicken eggs to grow large quantities of bacteria and viruses that were then weakened or killed to produce vaccines. The technique was known before Hilleman arrived, but isolating and then safely breeding a pathogen requires the touch of a very delicate artist. "Maurice was that artist," another scientist later recalled; "no one had the green thumb of mass production that he had."

By farming eggs, Maurice Hilleman saved tens of millions of lives, and prevented deafness, blindness, and other permanent disabilities among many millions more. No Albert Schweitzer or Florence Nightingale could ever post numbers like his. Doctors and nurses save lives one on one, and are paid by the hour. Hilleman saved lives by the carton, at grocery-store prices—acres of cartons, hundreds of millions of warm eggs replicating his genius around the clock.

Getting drug policy right depends mainly on getting that difference straight—the difference, that is, between ministering to the sick and making medicines—and grasping its implications from the start. Big Pharma's critics do not even try.

Pricing is indeed the key. Whether the first pill typically costs $100 million or $1 billion to develop, replicating it costs less—a thousand times less, or perhaps a million times less. This slope—precipice, really—is far steeper than most of the other hills and valleys of economic life. It complicates things immeasurably. It also largely explains the gulf between the industry's perception of reality and that of the critics.

The market price of a drug always drops sharply when the patent expires and competitors roll out generics. While Pfizer was still charging $10 to $30 per capsule in the United States for Fluconazole, which treats meningitis, knock-offs were being sold in India and Thailand for about thirty cents apiece. The precipice is especially steep for vaccines—because they begin with self-replicating pathogens and are manufactured in such large quantities—and for the custom-designed proteins in today's leading-edge drugs, which biotech companies mass-produce by cultivating genetically modified hamster ovaries and bacteria. The heights vary, but cliff-like economies rule throughout the industry.

The cliff is still higher if you compare the cost of manufacturing the last pill that rolls out of the factory against its value to the person who desperately needs it. A generation or two ago, the diseases

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that would be rubbed out by Hilleman's green thumb cost humanity countless billions in lost productivity, premature death, and time spent attending to the sick. Hilleman's egg farms saved lives at pennies a shot.

In circumstances like these, how is Merck, Pfizer, or GlaxoSmithKline to set an appropriate price? Economists have established—as rigorously as things ever get established by the dismal science—that there is no efficient price, no "right" price. Any scheme is, from one perspective or another, inefficient, unreasonable, or worse.

Viewed from the pill-in-hand perspective, the precipice supports what the critics demand—vaccines for pennies, not billions, prices pegged to the cost of the last pill, not the first. And that is indeed the economically efficient and socially desirable price to set—*after* a Hilleman has worked his magic, after you have the first egg, the first pill, securely in hand. But if you peg all prices to last-pill costs, you will not get another $2 trillion or so of private capital searching for another Hilleman—who, by the way, worked his magic at Merck. Big Pharma's critics have much to say about Merck's Vioxx, the arthritis painkiller that, because of suspected side effects, was pulled from the market in 2004. They rarely mention the company's vaccines.

The best solution, if you can pull it off, is to charge both more and less at the same time. Sometimes you can.

A drug called eflornithine was developed in the 1970's to treat cancer. It didn't suppress cancer very well—but it did, unexpectedly, cure something else: sleeping sickness. Endemic in many parts of Africa, sleeping sickness (trypanosomiasis) is the second most deadly parasitic disease on the planet. (Malaria is first.) Treated with eflornithine, the near-dead sleepers arise, take up their pallets, and walk.

But they are too poor to pay on the way out. In 1999, the manufacturer stopped producing the drug. It licensed the formula to the World Health Organization (WHO), but no other company was willing to make it. The reason was obvious: sub-Saharan Africa cannot cover even the second-pill cost of manufacturing Western drugs to Western standards. And the really poor, or those that assist them, can barely afford the last-pill cost.

Then Bristol-Myers-Squibb discovered that eflornithine impedes the growth of women's facial hair, and began marketing it in a beauty cream called Vaniqa. The company that still controlled the rights gave the WHO $25 million—enough for a five-year supply, at last-pill prices, plus research, surveillance, and training of health-care workers. Yes, the rich get Viagra, and Vaniqa too. The poor still get malaria, but they can now beat trypanosomiasis.

This, roughly, is what is meant by "price discrimination," or charging both more and less at the same time. The best scheme all around, for sellers and buyers alike, is a wide range of wealth-adjusted (or, technically speaking, "demand-elasticity-adjusted") prices. Complicated in theory, this is often an utter mess in practice—as we learn first-hand whenever we take an airplane trip. Business travelers get soaked, college students fly almost for free, and the jumble of prices in between drives most people nuts. But the planes are packed full, and that drives the *average* price of a ticket way down. The rich fly, and the much less rich fly, too.

As told by the journalist Tina Rosenberg, the Vaniqa story is "a scandalous illustration of the politics of neglected diseases—and of how much wealthy people drive the global medical market."* Big Pharma, she acidly concludes, values American complexions, not African lives. Well, not exactly. Shareholders paid for the drug's development. Complexions paid for the factory. Big Pharma gave WHO a license, and then, later, the cash to buy plenty of eflornithine at last-pill prices. Where then is the scandal?

It is pretty easy to package and market eflornithine in such a manner that a New York matron will not look to buy her face cream by mail order from a relief agency in Burkina Faso. In more prosaic circumstances, though, discriminatory prices can be difficult to sustain. Typically, resellers step in to buy low and sell just a bit higher, until the price gap all but disappears. It takes a lot of branding, packaging, peddling, and flacking to make one thing look like two (or more) different things. The no-name box in the supermarket contains exactly the same cereal, but you pay extra for Wheaties in order to partake in the Breakfast of Champions.

Big Pharma does Wheaties all the time, which infuriates the critics. Angell reports that, after its original patent for Prozac expired, Eli Lilly got a separate patent, and a separate FDA license, to use the old chemical for a new purpose: the treatment of "premenstrual dysphoric disorder." The company renamed Prozac as Sarafem, colored it pink and lavender, and was able to price the cute little pill three times higher than the green generic. There is, Angell believes, no possible justification for such nonsense.

* "How a Beauty Regime Salvaged a Cure for Sleeping Sickness," *New York Times*, March 29, 2006.

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But there is. This kind of behavior is not aberrant or anomalous—it is an inevitable and essential part of groping toward the right price where there is no right at the end of the tunnel. Somehow or other, the average price of the pill has to end up high enough to pay off the up-front cost.

No law of economics decrees that you can always accomplish this. Competition ordinarily pushes price down to marginal cost, paying no heed at all to costs that were sunk years ago. The problem is especially acute with drugs, where so much cost lies in the original chemical design. The pioneer also shoulders the considerable financial burden of persuading the FDA that the drug is safe and effective, while me-too applicants can, in principle, just photocopy what the pioneer has already filed. It is not impossible for the pioneering company to end up as the only player that fails to profit from its discovery.

Patents address this problem by granting a monopoly for a fixed term, during which the manufacturer can keep prices high or, better still, calibrate them to each buyer's willingness to pay. The Food and Drug Administration's "data exclusivity" rule places a separate hold on photocopy-licensing: for five years, competitors have to conduct their own, independent tests.

The rules keep patent and data-exclusivity rights quite narrow. Establishing the safety and efficacy of one drug-dose prescription for one disease wins an FDA license tailored to that drug-dose-disease combination, and the right to market the drug *only* for that single "on-label" use. A patent can likewise secure just the chemistry, or it can protect a novel method of use. Taken together, these conditions ensure a manageable licensing process, facilitate incremental improvements, and promote the search for new uses of old medicines. But they also let a drug company elude competition by differentiating one pill from another much like it, coloring a green pill pink and wrapping it in new legal paper.

Some green pills, indeed, are not given a patent *until* they are turned lavender or pink. You cannot patent bark from the Cinchona tree, even though it cures malaria, or penicillium mold, though it kills staphyloccocus bacteria—at least, not until you purify or tweak it enough to persuade the Patent Office that it is new and improved. Genetically engineered forms of life can be patented, but not "pure products of nature." Rules that protect even small changes in drug composition thus help promote the extraction of new therapies from the vast pharmacopoeia developed by four billion years of natural selection.

Similarly when it comes to promoting the search for radically new uses of old *man*-made drugs. Many important therapies almost certainly lie hidden in biochemically active entities developed years ago; academics and government researchers continue to look for them, but private capital may have little incentive to do the same. If a patent expires before even a first good application is found, manufacturing facilities will not be built, and any further search for useful effects will then depend on the ability of a small research lab to brew the chemical from scratch. Patent and data-exclusivity rules that protect the discovery of new uses of old drugs serve a valuable purpose here, too.

Much could be lost without them. Pills often work in mysterious ways, and happy surprises sometimes lie hidden at the bottom of the bottle. Rogaine and Viagra were both developed to lower blood pressure. The clinical trials didn't pan out, but participants reported new hair and better sex. Another chemical that suppresses hair growth also kills a parasite. Gemzar, developed to counter viral infections, is used to treat cancer. In the 1980's, the FDA officially classified as an "orphan drug" a compound derived from a deadly bacterium that causes botulism. The drug was needed to treat a rare, incapacitating disease characterized by uncontrollable twitching of the eye muscles, but liability concerns had driven its one supplier out of the market. Plastic surgeons now use botox to smooth out wrinkled faces.

Angell is quite certain that Big Pharma is economically sheltered to a far greater extent than it needs or deserves to be. Patents, she writes, "have relatively little to do with stimulating innovation, which usually occurs outside the industry." We are also told (somewhat paradoxically) that patents corrupt academics, small businesses, and the National Institutes of Health, because these entities are allowed to patent the fruits of government-funded research and license them to big drug companies. We should therefore run a six-year patent clock after a drug is licensed and scrap the FDA's data-exclusivity rule.

But there is no "therefore" there. Why not, instead, grant thirty-year patents and ten-year exclusivity? Might that not help interest Big Pharma in all the drugs that it currently will not touch at all? Perhaps.

OR PERHAPS not. To see why not, we have to return to the conundrum of pricing. Even a perpetual, ironclad monopoly will not guarantee returns sufficient to cover first-pill costs—no matter how good the drug, or how desperately it may be needed. This seems obvious enough in the case

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of a disease that afflicts people who survive on a dollar a day. But the calculation has to be made every time, in every case, and it does not become easier just because people paying for the pill happen to have more money.

Very Big Insurance can and frequently does flex its muscles to flatten and lower the prices a drug company would otherwise charge. In Canada, the government, acting as a buyers' cartel, may force the pioneer to choose between selling at a cut-rate price or not selling to Canadians at all. If it chooses to sell, residents of Detroit may then shop at Canadian prices by hopping on a Greyhound bus. (Online shoppers can skirt the law and shop at Canadian prices anywhere.) Or Medicare, Medicaid, the Veterans Administration, Anthem, Aetna, Kaiser Permanente, and all the other institutional buyers in Washington, Ottawa, and elsewhere may simply take their time deciding what they are willing to pay; and while they reflect, the patent clock ticks.

Other drugs are just too important for their own economic good. Supplies of vaccines are especially precarious, Angell notes: three out of four companies that were making vaccines twenty years ago no longer do so. She acknowledges one problem: in 1994, the Centers for Disease Control "capped what they would pay for vaccines purchased for use in public-health centers across the country—the source for most children in the United States." Nevertheless, she says, drug companies ought to be willing to continue supplying vital drugs "as a social service—and a thank-you to the public that subsidizes them so handsomely."

Unfortunately, that is pretty much how things work already. If Merck ever develops a vaccine for avian flu, it will end up selling most of what it produces to the government, and the government will get a very good deal. Every other drug that Merck sells is already sold at the government regulator's pleasure, and much of what it sells is paid for by the government's insurers. In these circumstances, Merck might quietly conclude that the government price for an avian-flu vaccine is bound to be *too* good, and decide to let some other drug company's shareholders deliver the thank-you.

There is more. Before a company decides to seek or manufacture a vaccine, cancer drug, or diet pill, a miracle breakthrough, a me-too variant, or an exact clone of a drug already on the market, it must also weigh the various risks of delay, failure, or worse. Although Angell complains that Big Pharma often out-sources the *scientific* risks inherent in searching for a new chemical that will cure a disease, at least as important are risks encountered beyond the lab: at the FDA, in the factory, and in the courts.

The first U.S. application for thalidomide—for use as a sleeping pill—was submitted to the FDA in 1960. A junior official took her time reviewing the original application. While she did, a German scientist identified thalidomide's dreadful power to halt embryonic limb development in the early stages of pregnancy. Delay was all the FDA contributed, but that alone prevented thousands of birth defects in the United States. Thirty-seven years later, the FDA authorized use of the drug to treat a rare condition associated with Hansen's disease (leprosy).

Persuading the FDA and the medical community that the correct lines have been drawn to separate good drug-dose-disease combinations from bad requires a great deal of money and a long and often unpredictable amount of time. Exact chemical copies of drugs already approved are fast; me-too variants only somewhat slower. Also relatively fast are drugs that offer even a glimmer of hope in treating late stages of terminal disease—inoperable or metastatic cancer, for example. By contrast with these, drugs used by pregnant women and children are difficult; and vaccines, because they are administered to large numbers of healthy children, are especially problematic.

Manufacturing adds another tier of expense and risk. Development of the vaccines that eradicated polio from most of the Western world was funded mainly by the March of Dimes. That charitable foundation also oversaw the first field trials establishing the safety and efficacy of Jonas Salk's vaccine. It then handed the project to the government, which licensed five private companies to produce the vaccine. Although the government prescribed exactly how it was to be manufactured, the instructions were not quite the same as those the foundation had promulgated prior to the first trial. The Cutter Company, the smallest of the five licensees, followed the government's instructions to the letter, but failed to kill all the virus in the vaccine. Seventy thousand people suffered mild forms of polio. Two hundred were paralyzed. Ten died.*

The Cutter tragedy helped spark changes in liability law that made it much easier to sue drug companies for their failures, even in the absence of negligence. Today, some liability claims are all but certain to be forthcoming when millions of users pop the same pill, and every drug carries with it an

* This episode is described in *The Cutter Incident: How America's First Polio Vaccine Led to the Growing Vaccine Crisis* by Paul Offit (Yale University Press, 256 pp., $27.50).

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inescapable risk of bet-the-company litigation. Estimates of Merck's Vioxx exposure currently range from $5 to $50 billion. Along with other vaccine manufacturers, Merck is also defending claims that thimerosal, a mercury-based vaccine additive, causes autism. It almost certainly does not, but juries cannot always be trusted to get things right.*

One influential writer has explained the process well. Tort lawyers, who know how to "prey on people's fears," "postulate increasingly obscure syndromes" that "can't be studied systematically." Juries "usually have no competence in the area," often "misinterpret science," and base their judgments on "emotional appeals." Moreover, "losing just one lawsuit can stimulate an avalanche of others, and each loss usually means the stakes grow higher in the next case." For a company that "loses just one of every ten or twenty cases, the costs can be enormous." Litigation can thus "destroy thriving companies," shut down "an important area of medical research," and even "threaten an entire industry."

It is a pity that Marcia Angell never mentions any of these consideration in her book touting "the truth about drug companies." The omission is all the more regrettable since she wrote the above words herself in *Science on Trial*, her 1996 book about breast-implant litigation, and they are as relevant today as they were ten years ago.

THE VARIOUS risks I have described overlap and interact. Whatever a drug company says, or fails to say, during the FDA licensing process may figure prominently in subsequent lawsuits. Even the FDA's fully informed approval of the factory, and of the labels and package inserts that accompany the pill, may not suffice—a jury is free to conclude that things should have been done, or just said, differently. As Angell correctly noted a decade ago, trial lawyers have been remarkably successful at putting all the focus "on the manufacturers' behavior" and at "avoid[ing] the issue of causation altogether."

The risks also vary greatly from drug to drug. The FDA's treatment of different categories of drugs reflects reasonable medical judgments and policy choices. But juries, acting in hindsight, and weighing the story of a single claimant, can be swayed by a much broader range of human emotions. A child with a birth defect is a good plaintiff, however tenuous the connection may be between the defect and the mother's morning-sickness pill, obstetrician, anesthesiologist, or labor-inducing drug.

And this brings us back to the mystery of the missing drugs, the ones that Big Pharma ignores. Why didn't WHO just make eflornithine itself? Why aren't the so-called "real innovators"—the small biotechs, universities, government labs, etc.—stepping up to supply the neglected anesthetics, anti-venoms, steroids for premature infants, and childhood vaccines? Why is Big Pharma *itself* ignoring them?

The short answer is that drugs in general, however innovative and valuable they appear up front, may present more risk than smaller players can shoulder. Some may promise too little return, and harbor too much economic risk, to be handled by anyone.

As for Big Pharma's addiction to *un*necessary medications, Angell would have the FDA review not only the safety and efficacy of each new drug but also the public's need for it. She questions whether many drugs are needed at all. The companies, she contends, "promote diseases to fit their drugs," redefining the "high" in "cholesterol" or "blood pressure," the "dysfunction" in "erectile," the "dysphoric" in menses, and the "normal" in "aging." She also believes that new drugs are often worse than the old ones they replace. The FDA, she argues, should license a drug only upon a showing that it is materially better than what is already available.

In practice, this would create an enormous bias in favor of the first drug through the gate. Establishing efficacy is a very large undertaking, even in tests against a placebo. For later arrivals, the far higher cost of testing drug against drug would crush incremental improvements completely. It would also cut off the possibility of discovering that a second-best pill for a first disease is the first-best pill for a second. Eflornithine performed worse than other cancer drugs, and unwanted facial hair is a normal incident of female aging. No drug company ever would have bothered to submit *this* drug to Angell's FDA.

MUCH OF the conduct described by Angell and other critics rings true, because it sounds like a rational response to economic reality. It is the critics' explanation of motives that fails to persuade. Why do big drug companies compete fiercely to supply what we don't much need, but not what we really need? Because, comes the response, they are greedy and profitable, spending huge amounts to flack their unneeded products, and jacking up their prices to cover all those unnecessary costs.

Industry flacks do indeed spend a great deal to sell us better sex and thinner thighs. But does that

* See *The Vaccine Controversy: The History, Use, and Safety of Vaccinations* by Kurt Link (Praeger, 208 pp., $34.95).

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mean they also contrive to suppress demand for drugs to induce labor, steroids for premature infants, or childhood vaccines? The more plausible story is that big drug companies shun some drugs and embrace others because, collectively, the FDA, doctors, patients, insurers, and juries push costs higher, and prices lower, on some categories of drugs and not on others, to the point where some make economic sense and some do not. Universities and small biotechs license their innovations to Big Pharma because they lack the capital, scale, and expertise required for mass manufacturing, because they wouldn't know how to sell the same drug five times in succession (to the FDA, doctors, patients, insurers, and juries), and because a vast and swampy system separates pharmaceutical innovation from the treatment of real patients at prices that will cover cost and earn a profit. The little guys just don't have what it takes to finish the job. When Big Pharma is waiting, Godot comes running.

Big Pharma spends as much as it does on pink-and-lavender branding because Vaniqa economics rule; because price discrimination, though economically essential, is difficult to sustain; because big insurers have so much power to flatten prices; and because patent laws are too porous to fend off me-too competitors. Few companies manufacture vaccines because vaccines are so essential that they are sold mainly to the government, at reasonable-and-uniform—which is to say rock-bottom—prices, and because the seller may well be bankrupted by lawsuits if a problem is uncovered only after tens of millions of healthy people have been vaccinated.

The critics say that pricing complexity is so much fog, created by big drug companies in order to hide what they spend seducing regulators and academics, corrupting doctors, and beguiling patients. The industry's economic fundamentals suggest precisely the opposite. Fog is essential to sustain price discrimination—which is good, not bad, when the first pill costs a million times more than the last. Many small drug companies, government labs, and academics pursue drugs we really need. Aid organizations like WHO were keenly interested in getting eflornithine to Africa. But none could get it there, not for love or money. That required Vaniqa.

Today's health-care dollars mainly buy not drugs but time and beds. Hospital care accounts for about 30 percent of on-budget health spending; physician and clinical services account for another 20 percent. The money pays mainly for manual labor—the cost of one person laying hands on another, working from the outside in, with the medical equivalents of wheelbarrows, shovels, and picks. There are no cost cliffs in this line of work. When the matron pays her plastic surgeon in New York, he doesn't throw in a free resurrection for the afflicted in Ouagadougou.

Prescription drugs currently account for well under 20 percent of the health-care budget. Within a generation or two, they will undoubtedly account for most of it—which will be another good thing. Pharma's biochemical cures always end up far cheaper than the people-centered services they ultimately displace. Moreover, while much hands-on care only drags things out or soothes, the best medicines really cure. It is true that, early on in the pharmacological assault on a grave disease, drugs also stretch things out and can fail to beat the disease, so we often end up buying more drug and more doctor, too. But eventually drugs improve to the point where they beat the disease and thus lay off both doctor and hospital.

None of this can be very welcome to people who believe that the most important thing about health care is that it be uniform and universal. If you like the way Canada operates its health-care system, you will never like the way Big Pharma does drugs. And yet, step by inexorable step, advocates of Canadian health care are losing everywhere, and Big Pharma is taking over the business.

Big Government makes health care fair, transparent, and reasonable by making it flat. Big Pharma exploits the cliffs and valleys of Vaniqa economics. Big Government makes collective calls about safety, efficacy, cost, and insurance coverage. Big Pharma tweaks, tinkers, packages, and brands in order to load the pharmacy's shelves with mind-numbing arrays of very similar medicines sold at very different prices. Flat drug prices are not good for us; price spreads, wide enough to cover first-pill costs and meet last-pill pocketbooks, are good for us.

Biochemical tweaking is good for us, too. People and their diseases vary, often in small ways. Biochemical effects are hard to predict. Even trivial changes can make big differences, and medical progress often depends on trial and error. Developed for insomniacs, thalidomide now treats leprosy. First revealed in the human womb, the drug's extraordinary power to halt cell division also holds promise in the treatment of brain and breast cancer, macular degeneration in the eye, and immune-system diseases. AIDS patients organized buyers' clubs to bootleg the drug from Brazil because of its powerful effect on the immune system. Drugs and drug cocktails are now being matched to genotype. Stem-cell scientists are moving beyond chickens

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and mice to cultivate genetically customized therapies from human ovaries.

Over the last decade, extraordinary advances in bioengineering have transformed pharmacology. Sooner or later, the industry and its pilot fish will surely find drugs that can halt colon, breast, and lung cancers, that can curb obesity and thus heart disease, and that will not merely suppress the HIV virus but purge it from the body completely. A new pharmacology of the brain may cure depression and stop the onset of Alzheimer's. These and other once inscrutable scourges are now—essentially—becoming problems in diligent engineering.

They are very difficult and expensive problems, as engineering problems go. And government funding did indeed pay for much of the underlying science, and continues to pay for it, just as the industry's critics charge. Some 600 publicly traded pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies worldwide, however, are now capitalized at over $1.5 trillion. The industry's critics would subordinate current management to public-utility regulation. We will fare better, much better, if we streamline regulation, curb litigation, and unleash prices to make vaccines as alluring to Big Pharma as Viagra and Vaniqa.

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Why Israel Is Free to Set Its Own Borders

Michael I. Krauss & J. Peter Pham

DURING THIS spring's election campaign in Israel, Ehud Olmert was candid about his Kadima party's plan for disengagement from the West Bank. His message was simple: with no one to talk to on the Palestinian side, Israel would have to act unilaterally to define and secure its borders.

Kadima's plan for "realignment" mainly amounted to withdrawing at least 60,000 settlers into blocs adjacent to the so-called Green Line (the ceasefire line established in 1949 at the end of Israel's War of Independence) and declaring a permanent border. Olmert was careful not to describe the exact contours of this settlement evacuation, but he made clear that it would bring all the settlers within Israel's yet-to-be-completed security barrier, which has been under construction since 2002. An estimated 193,000 Israelis already live in the 8 percent of Judea and Samaria that is between the projected route of the barrier and the 1949 boundaries.

Given that the government of the Palestinian Authority (PA) is now controlled by the terrorists of Hamas, the Bush administration has gently indicated that, while it prefers a negotiated deal with the Palestinians, it is open to supporting Israel's unilateral drawing of borders to include limited amounts of territory gained in the Six-Day war of 1967. As Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice put it, employing a delicately diplomatic double negative, "I would not on the face of it just say absolutely that we don't think there's any value in what the Israelis are talking about." When newly elected Prime Minister Olmert visited Washington in May, President Bush gave a similarly positive, if ambiguous, response, praising the Israeli leader for his "bold ideas."

Other elements of the international community, however, have wasted no time in decrying Israel's effort formally to incorporate small parts of the West Bank. Speaking to the European Parliament in April, Javier Solana, the European Union's top foreign-policy official, lamented the "lack of dialogue with the Palestinian people in determining Israel's borders." Not to be outdone, former President Jimmy Carter, writing in *USA Today*, condemned Kadima's program as a naked "land grab," a violation of international law that no "objective member of the international community could accept." On May 25, the *New York Times* chimed in, denouncing the idea of Israel's setting its own borders and lumping together Hamas, the government of Israel, and Bush as "two culprits and an enabler."

In the view of Solana, Carter, the *Times* editorial board, and many other "objective" observers, the boundary between Israel and its Arab neighbors that prevailed between 1949 and 1967 is not just a historical baseline; it is a legitimate and well-established international border, one that the Jewish

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state has now ignored for nearly four decades. Such borders cannot be altered by force. As these critics see it, the Six-Day war of 1967 resulted in Israel's "occupation" of the West Bank (as well as of the Gaza Strip, Golan Heights, and East Jerusalem). Much as that action might have been required by the exigencies of the time, it gives Israel no ongoing title to those lands. Indeed, in the view of the critics, it makes Israel's long-term presence there nothing less than an ongoing crime.

But are these claims supported by the history of Israel's conflict with its Arab neighbors, to say nothing of the standards of international law? In the West Bank, is Israel, in fact, an "occupier"?

WITH RESPECT to Jewish settlement on the West Bank, the first document of any legal consequence dates from the San Remo Conference of 1920, where the victorious allied powers of World War I assigned the League of Nations mandate for Palestine to Great Britain. In doing so, they recognized, in the words of the mandate, "the historical connection of the Jewish people with Palestine" and the "grounds for constituting their national home in that country." Article 6 of the document even "encouraged close settlement by Jews on the land," land very much including the modern West Bank.*

Though the League of Nations ceased to exist after World War II, the established right of Jews to live in the territories of Palestine remained in force. When the United Nations was created in 1946, its charter specifically preserved the existing mandates of the League. A year later, in Resolution 181, the UN, facing Great Britain's withdrawal from its mandate, recommended the partition of Palestine. Though the resolution, like all actions of the General Assembly, lacked legislative authority—and thus did not vest territorial rights in the region's Jews or Arabs—it did express the wishes of the international community.

Or, at any rate, most of the international community. For partition of Palestine was rejected from the start by the Arab states. As Israel prepared to claim its independence, the forces of Egypt, Iraq, Lebanon, Syria, and Saudi Arabia made ready to invade, hoping to strangle the Jewish state in its cradle. Though this act of aggression failed, it did result in Jordan's forcible acquisition of the West Bank, in direct violation of the UN partition resolution and of the UN Charter. Jordan went so far as to purport to have annexed the area, but between 1949 and 1967, only two UN member states (Great Britain and Pakistan) recognized its sovereignty there. Indeed, even while asserting its claim over the West Bank, Jordan insisted that the dividing line established in 1949 was not an international border but rather, in the words of the armistice agreement, a provision "dictated exclusively by military considerations."

What did all this mean for the West Bank's legal status? According to Sir Elihu Lauterpacht, editor of *Oppenheim's International Law*, one of the field's authoritative reference works, *no* state had sovereignty over the West Bank at the onset of the 1948-49 war. Jordan certainly could not then lay legitimate claim to the territory after acquiring it through armed aggression.† Nor could the UN, since its partition proposal was merely hortatory—a recommendation—and in any event the organization's charter contains no authorization for it to assume territorial sovereignty anywhere. In these circumstances, Lauterpacht concludes, the British withdrawal from the territory of the mandate resulted in a lapse or vacancy of internationally recognized sovereignty. The West Bank was, in legal jargon, *res nullius*: a thing belonging to no state. In such a case, sovereignty in international law may be acquired by any state in a position to assert effective and stable control without resort to unlawful means—a situation that would not exist until 1967.

IT WAS with the Six-Day war of 1967 that Israel first came into possession of the West Bank, bringing down upon itself the now familiar charge of being an illegal "occupier" there. But a charge does not acquire moral or legal force simply through repetition over time, even if such repetition establishes it as conventional wisdom. Like the notion that Jordan or the UN or some other entity held valid title to the West Bank after 1949, the related notion that Israel's presence in the territory constitutes an "occupation" is utterly specious.

On May 15, 1967, President Gamal Abdel Nasser of Egypt sent his troops into the Sinai peninsula and massed them near the Israeli border. Syrian troops simultaneously assembled in the Golan Heights. A week later, Egypt closed the Straits of Tiran to Israeli shipping and blockaded the port of Eilat, thus halting the flow of oil to the Jewish state

* It was Britain's 1922 carving of "Transjordan" as a separate Hashemite state out of the territory of mandatory Palestine, and the exclusion of Jews from this new entity, that in fact represented a violation of the agreed-upon legal arrangement.

† This remains an important point today. The Palestinian Authority's current claim to the territory is predicated on Jordan's having ceded its own legal claims to the PLO in 1988. International law has, however, consistently adhered to the norm of "*nemo dat quod non habet*": no one can give that which he does not own.

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from its main supplier, the Shah's Iran. Under intense pressure from Nasser, Jordan's King Hussein signed a "defense pact" with the Egypt- ians. Algeria, Iraq, Kuwait, and Saudi Arabia also contributed troops and arms to the build-up.

About the purpose of these military measures there could be no ambiguity. Hafez al-Assad, then the defense minister of Syria, exultantly declared his forces ready "to explode the Zionist presence in the Arab homeland." Nasser stated that "our basic objective is the destruction of Israel," adding that the Arabs "will not accept any coexistence with Israel." The Iraqi president, Abdur Rahman Aref, seconded these bloodthirsty sentiments in terms recently echoed by the current president of Iran: "The existence of Israel is an error which must be rectified. . . . Our goal is clear—to wipe Israel off the map."

For Israel, these actions and statements constituted an unambiguous *casus belli*. Availing itself of the customary rights of international law, as well as the specific provisions of Article 51 of the UN Charter, the Jewish state set out to defend itself.

Surrounded on all sides and with its survival in the balance, Israel launched a remarkable series of air strikes on the morning of June 5, destroying the Egyptian and Syrian air forces while their pilots slept or ate breakfast. Simultaneously, Israeli armored units engaged Egyptians in the Sinai, while a small unit of the Israeli Defense Force (IDF) heroically held off Syrian troops entrenched on the Golan Heights and then pushed them back. That same day, Israeli Prime Minister Levi Eshkol sent a message to King Hussein of Jordan, promising that Israel would not attack if Jordan stayed out of the fight. But Hussein, convinced that the Arabs would win, rejected the offer, and the Jordanian Legion began shelling West Jerusalem. Jordan also made thrusts westward, including the occupation of Government House in Jerusalem, which had been used by UN observers. Israel retaliated, and within two days the IDF had routed the Jordanians and achieved, miraculously to the mind of Israelis, the reunification of Jerusalem. No less fatefully, the Jewish state, having initially planned to remain purely defensive on the Jordanian front, had now overrun Jordanian positions throughout Judea and Samaria—that is, the West Bank.

After six days of fighting, Israel might easily have marched on to Cairo, Damascus, and Amman. Under the traditional laws of war, it certainly would have been justified in doing so, with the aim of neutralizing its bellicose enemies. But having no desire to wage offensive war, Prime Minister Eshkol and his cabinet yielded to American wishes and on June 10 accepted a unilateral ceasefire. At this point, a series of diplomatic and juridical maneuvers took place, the consequences of which are still relevant today.

The day after the ceasefire, the Soviet Union, which had been humiliated along with the Arab clients it had armed and supplied, introduced in the UN Security Council a resolution branding Israel the aggressor and calling for its immediate withdrawal to the boundaries that had existed before the conflict. The resolution was defeated. The USSR then switched its efforts to the General Assembly, where a similar resolution was also defeated. When the Security Council reconvened in the fall of 1967, the USSR tried yet again, only to be rebuffed a third time. The UN was not prepared to demand that Israel return, without condition, territory that it had taken in a defensive war provoked by its enemies' aggression.

It was in this context that Resolution 242, introduced by the British ambassador, was adopted unanimously by the Security Council on November 22. The resolution had something for both sides. On the one hand, it called for the "withdrawal of Israeli armed forces from territories occupied in the recent conflict"; on the other hand, it described the necessary backdrop for such a withdrawal as the right of "every state in the area to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries free from threats or acts of force." Since Israel had never denied the legitimacy or the existence of its sovereign neighbors, the onus was clearly on its Arab enemies to acknowledge Israel. Such acknowledgment, as we know, was not to be had, thus foreclosing the possibility of the "secure and recognized borders" contemplated by the resolution.

Despite decades of misinformation to the contrary, the text of Resolution 242 did *not* require Israel to withdraw to the truce lines that existed before the war. Testimony by Arthur J. Goldberg, the former Supreme Court Justice who was then serving as U.S. ambassador to the UN, is telling. As he wrote in 1988,

> The notable omissions in language used to refer to withdrawal are the words *the*, *all*, and the *June 5, 1967 lines*. . . . [T]here is lacking a declaration requiring Israel to withdraw from *the* (or *all the*) territories occupied by it on and after June 5, 1967. Instead, the resolution stipulates withdrawal *from occupied territories* without defining the extent of the withdrawal. And it can be inferred from the incorporation of the

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> words *secure and recognized boundaries* that the territorial adjustments to be made by the parties in their peace settlements could encompass less than a complete withdrawal of Israeli forces from occupied territories [emphases in the original].

Goldberg's interpretation may in fact understate the original meaning of Resolution 242. According to George Brown, Britain's foreign secretary at the time, the explicit and well-understood point of the text was that "Israel will not withdraw from all the territories."*

Commentators wishing to contest this view have emphasized Resolution 242's assertion of the principle of "the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by war." Setting aside the fact that a great many countries include within them territory obtained through armed conflict, this principle simply does not apply to Israel's seizure of the West Bank, or to its continuing control of the area today. The expression "by war" is not a legal synonym for "as a result of armed conflict." The principle pertains only to the conquest of territory through *military aggression*, of which Israel was manifestly not guilty.

In 1967, Israel fought not to extend its realm but to preserve its very existence and to establish a secure frontier—actions with obvious legitimacy in international law. As Judge Steven Schwebel, who would later head the International Court of Justice, noted in a 1970 article in the *American Journal of International Law*, "Where the prior holder of territory [in this case, Jordan] had seized that territory unlawfully, the state which subsequently takes that territory in the lawful exercise of self-defense has . . . better title."

Israel's legal claim to the West Bank is also supported by the principle of prescription. As the U.S. Supreme Court noted in the case of *Arkansas* v. *Tennessee* (1940), prescription in international law refers to "the acquisition of sovereignty over a territory through continuous and undisturbed exercise of sovereignty." The point of this principle is straightforward enough; it rests, in the words of the eminent legal scholar Lassa Oppenheim, on "the same rational basis as prescription in municipal law—namely, the creation of stability and order." Based solely on these criteria, Israel's claim is plainly stronger than that of Jordan, Great Britain (the mandate holder), or Turkey (the prior colonial ruler), all of which were dispossessed from the West Bank long ago.

Israel itself has been silent about the status of its presence in the West Bank, declining to recognize the application of Israeli law to the hostile indigenous population even as it has established Jewish settlements in the area (an act of sovereignty). Because of this ambiguity, Israel's claim based on prescription is less than invincible—although it remains better than the claim of any other state.

AS FOR those Israeli settlements, some number of which would be preserved under Prime Minister Olmert's withdrawal plan, it is often asserted that they themselves constitute a breach of international law. More specifically, it is argued that the Israeli towns violate the Fourth Geneva Convention, ratified in 1949 to protect civilians in wartime. In the words of the convention, to which Israel is a signatory, an occupying power "shall not deport or transfer parts of its own civilian population into territory it occupies."

As we have already seen, there are strong reasons to hold that Israel is not the aggressive occupier of the West Bank but its sovereign. For this reason alone the Fourth Geneva Convention is arguably inapplicable. Nor is that the only reason: under its own article 2, the convention applies only to cases involving the "occupation of the territory of a High Contracting Party [i.e., state], by another such Party." Before 1967, as we have seen, the West Bank was not a recognized part of any other such "High Contracting Party."

But let us set this legal argument aside. Even so, it is highly doubtful that the Fourth Geneva Convention, according to its original meaning and intent, would forbid the settlement of Jews in the West Bank. The convention was established in response to the Nazi practice of forcibly transporting populations into or out of occupied territories in order to liquidate them, or to use them as slave labor. Even if Israel were an occupying power in the West Bank, and if the Fourth Geneva Convention were applicable, Jewish settlement would be forbidden there only if, in the language of the convention, such transfers "impair[ed] the economic situation or racial integrity of the native population."

But this condition hardly obtains. For all of the protests that have long surrounded Israel's presence in the West Bank, the past four decades have seen

* The French version of the draft resolution was framed possibly more ambiguously, speaking of a "*retrait des forces armées israéliennes des territoires occupés.*" But as Eugene V. Rostow showed, independent linguistic checks of the text were made in different foreign ministries and the original English text was allowed to stand as formulated. The use of the phrase "*des territories occupés*" ("from *the* occupied territories") has been attributed even by many French grammarians to the requirements of the French language, not to a divergent interpretation of the resolution.

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the territory's "native population" skyrocket, with a growth rate far exceeding that of Israel itself. Moreover, as Efraim Karsh has exhaustively documented in these pages, the West Bank, while under full Israeli control, prospered as have few other corners of the Arab world, whether one looks at health, education, or economic development.* One might even argue that, far from being a cruel occupier, Israel has done more to enhance the "economic situation" and "racial integrity" of the Palestinians than have the Palestinians themselves.

IT IS beyond the scope of this essay to consider *why* much of the world (including, alas, the United States) has seen fit to assign to Israel the unhappy epithet of "occupier." But one of the most striking findings for those who do research in this area is that the term "occupied territories" seems to apply only to Israel's administration of the West Bank (and, previously, Gaza). The term is rarely if ever used in discussing other bitter, long-standing territorial disputes. Indian Kashmir, for instance, is merely a "disputed region" in the eyes of the U.S. Department of State. Nor is it easy to find international actors ready to point an accusing finger at "occupation forces" in Kurdistan and Northern Cyprus or, for that matter, in Quebec, Catalonia, and Ulster. When it comes to the concept of "occupied territory," Israel would appear—unjustly—to have a monopoly.

None of this is to suggest that Israel's legal and historical claims to sovereignty in the West Bank require it to remain there. But neither is it required to consult either the Palestinian Arabs or the self-appointed representatives of the "international community" if it decides to withdraw from some territory and determine its own borders. As Ariel Sharon and now Ehud Olmert have argued, it may well be in Israel's national interest to disentangle itself, as much as prudence requires, from the Palestinians and the territory in which they predominate. As many Israelis see it, to do any less might court the risk of Israel's itself becoming an "occupied territory"—and at the hands of a far less benign power.

It would be best to bring about any such disengagement through negotiations with a credible and well-meaning Palestinian counterpart. But for now and the foreseeable future, the seat on the other side of the table remains empty. In this circumstance, exactly as in the 1967 war of aggression that attempted its annihilation, Israel, if it chooses to do so, has every legal right to act alone.

* See "What Occupation?" in the July-August 2002 Commentary.

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The Realities of Immigration

Linda Chavez

WHAT TO DO about immigration—both legal and illegal—has become one of the most controversial public-policy debates in recent memory. But why it has occurred at this particular moment is something of a mystery. The rate of immigration into the U.S., although high, is still below what it was even a few years ago, the peak having been reached in the late 1990's. President Bush first talked about comprehensive immigration reform almost immediately after assuming office, but he put the plan on hold after 9/11 and only reintroduced the idea in 2004. Why the current flap?

By far the biggest factor shaping the popular mood seems to have been the almost daily drumbeat on the issue from political talk-show hosts, most prominently CNN's Lou Dobbs and the Fox News Channel's Bill O'Reilly and Sean Hannity (both of whom also have popular radio shows), syndicated radio hosts Rush Limbaugh, Laura Ingraham, Michael Savage, and G. Gordon Liddy, and a plethora of local hosts reaching tens of millions of listeners each week. Stories about immigration have become a staple of cable news, with sensational footage of illegal crossings featured virtually every day.

Media saturation has led, in turn, to the emergence of immigration as a wedge issue in the still-nascent 2008 presidential campaign. Several aspiring Republican candidates—former House Speaker Newt Gingrich, Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist, and Senator George Allen—have worked to burnish their "get tough" credentials, while, on the other side of the issue, Senator John McCain has come forward as the lead sponsor of a bill to allow most illegal aliens to earn legal status. For their part, potential Democratic candidates have remained largely mum, unsure how the issue plays with their various constituencies.

And then there are the immigrants themselves, who have shown surprising political muscle, especially in response to legislation passed by the House that would turn the illegal aliens among them into felons. Millions of mostly Hispanic protesters have taken to the streets in our big cities in recent months, waving American flags and (more controversially) their own national flags while demanding recognition and better treatment. Though Hispanic leaders and pro-immigrant advocates point to the protests as evidence of a powerful new civil-rights movement, many other Americans see the demonstrators as proof of an alien invasion—and a looming threat to the country's prosperity and unity.

In short, it is hard to recall a time when there has been so much talk about immigration and immigration reform—or when so much of the talk has been misinformed, misleading, and ahistorical. Before policy-makers can decide what to do about immigration, the problem itself needs to be better

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defined, not just in terms of costs and benefits but in relation to America's deepest values.

Contrary to popular myth, immigrants have never been particularly welcome in the United States. Americans have always tended to romanticize the immigrants of their grandparents' generation while casting a skeptical eye on contemporary newcomers. In the first decades of the 20th century, descendants of Northern European immigrants resisted the arrival of Southern and Eastern Europeans, and today the descendants of those once unwanted Italians, Greeks, and Poles are deeply distrustful of current immigrants from Latin America. Congressman Tom Tancredo, a Republican from Colorado and an outspoken advocate of tighter restrictions, is fond of invoking the memory of his Italian immigrant grandfather to argue that he is not anti-immigrant, just anti-*illegal* immigration. He fails to mention that at the time his grandfather arrived, immigrants simply had to show up on American shores (or walk across the border) to gain legal entry.

With the exception of the infamous Alien and Sedition Acts of 1798, there were few laws regulating immigration for the first hundred years of the nation's history. Though nativist sentiment increased throughout the later decades of the 19th century, giving rise to the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act, it was not until 1917 that Congress began methodically to limit all immigration, denying admission to most Asians and Pacific Islanders and, in 1924, imposing quotas on those deemed undesirable: Jews, Italians, and others from Southern and Eastern Europe. These restrictions remained largely in effect until 1952, when Congress lifted many of them, including the bar on Asians.

The modern immigration era commenced in 1965 with the passage of the Immigration and Nationality Act, which abolished all national-origin quotas, gave preference to close relatives of American citizens, refugees, and individuals with certain skills, and allowed for immigrants from the Western hemisphere on a first-come, first-served basis. The act's passage drew a huge wave, much of it from Latin America and Asia. From 1970 to 2000, the United States admitted more than 20 million persons as permanent residents.

By 2000, some 3 million of these new residents were formerly illegal aliens who had gained amnesty as part of the 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA). This, Congress's first serious attempt to stem the flow of illegal immigration, forced employers to determine the status of their workers and imposed heavy penalties on those hiring illegal entrants. But from the beginning, the law was fraught with problems. It created huge bureaucratic burdens, even for private individuals wanting to hire someone to cut their lawn or care for their children, and spawned a vast new document-fraud industry for immigrants eager to get hold of the necessary paperwork. The law has been a monumental failure. Today, some 11.5 million illegal aliens reside in the U.S.—quadruple the population of two decades ago, when IRCA was enacted—and the number is growing by an estimated 500,000 a year.

The status quo has thus become untenable, and particularly so since the attacks of 9/11, which prompted fears of future terrorists sneaking across our sieve-like borders as easily as would-be busboys, janitors, and construction workers. Though virtually all Americans agree that something must be done, finding a good solution has proven elusive. The Bush administration has significantly increased border enforcement, adding nearly 30-percent more border-patrol agents since 2001 and increasing funding by 66 percent. The border patrol now employs nearly as many agents as the FBI, over 12,000 by the end of this fiscal year (not counting the additional 6,000 proposed by the President in May). But with some 6,000 miles of land border to monitor, that figure represents only one agent per mile (assuming eight-hour, 'round-the-clock shifts). Still, there has been progress: illegal immigration has actually slowed a bit since its peak during the boom economy of the late 1990's—a fact rarely noted in the current debate—though it has begun climbing again.

The latest suggestion is to build a wall along the border with Mexico. Some sections of the border already have 10-foot-high steel fences in place, and bills recently passed by the House and Senate authorize the construction of hundreds of additional miles of fencing along the border in California, Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas. The President, too, has endorsed the idea of a more formidable barrier. The Minuteman Project, a group that fashions itself a citizens' patrol, has volunteered to build the fence on private property along the Arizona/Mexico border. But unless the United States is prepared to build fences on its southern *and* northern borders, illegal entry will continue, albeit in diminished numbers. (Some 200,000 illegal immigrants—the equivalent of 1.8 million in U.S. terms—now live in Canada; most are Asians, but they are increasingly being joined by Latin Ameri-

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cans who in many cases are hoping to make the United States their ultimate destination.) More problematic for advocates of a fence is that an estimated 45 percent of all illegal aliens enter lawfully and simply overstay the terms of their visas.

So what might alleviate the current situation? Restrictionists claim that better internal enforcement, with crackdowns on employers who hire illegal aliens, would deter more from coming. This might work if we were willing to adopt a national identification card for every person in the country and a sophisticated instant-check system to verify the employment eligibility of each of the nation's 150 million workers. But concern over immigration seems unlikely on its own to spark sufficient support for such a system. Even after 9/11, when some experts recommended national ID's as a necessary security measure, Americans were reluctant to endorse the idea, fearing its implications for privacy.

President Bush has now proposed a tamper-proof card that all foreign workers would be required to carry, though one can envision grave "profiling" difficulties with this, not least when native-born Hispanic and Asian workers are selectively asked to produce such identification. Moreover, an experimental version of a program to require instant checks of work eligibility—now included in both the House and the Senate immigration bills—produced a nearly 30-percent error rate for legal immigrants who were denied employment.

THE REAL question is not whether the U.S. has the means to stop illegal immigration—no doubt, with sufficient resources, we could mostly do so—but whether we would be better off as a nation without these workers. Restrictionists claim that large-scale immigration—legal and illegal—has depressed wages, burdened government resources, and acted as a net drain on the economy. The Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR), the most prominent of the pressure groups on the issue, argues that, because of this influx, hourly earnings among American males have not increased appreciably in 30 years. As the restrictionists see it, if the U.S. got serious about defending its borders, there would be plenty of Americans willing to do the jobs now performed by workers from abroad.

Indeed, FAIR and other extremists on the issue wish not only to eliminate illegal immigration but drastically to reduce or halt *legal* immigration as well. Along with its public-policy arm, the Center for Immigration Studies (CIS), FAIR has long argued that the U.S. should aim for a population of just 150 million persons—that is, about half the current level. If such an agenda sounds suspiciously like views usually found on the Left, that is no accident.

One of the great ironies of the current immigration debate is the strange ideological bedfellows it has created. The founder of the modern anti-immigration movement, a Michigan physician named John Tanton, is the former national president of Zero Population Growth and a long-time activist with Planned Parenthood and several Left-leaning environmentalist groups. Tanton came to the issue of immigration primarily because of his fears about overpopulation and the destruction of natural resources. Through an umbrella organization, U.S. Inc., he has created or funded not only FAIR and CIS but such groups as NumbersUSA, Population-Environment Balance, Pro-English, and U.S. English.* The Social Contract Press, another of Tanton's outfits, is the English-language publisher of the apocalyptic—and frankly racist—1975 novel *Camp of the Saints*, written by the French right-wing author Jean Raspail. The book, which apparently had a considerable influence in shaping Tanton's own views, foretells the demise of Europe at the hands of hordes of East Indians who invade the continent, bringing with them disease, crime, and anarchy.

As for the more conventional claims advanced by restrictionists, they, too, are hard to credit. Despite the presence in our workforce of millions of illegal immigrants, the U.S. is currently creating slightly more than two million jobs a year and boasts an unemployment rate of 4.7 percent, which is lower than the average in each of the past four decades. More to the point perhaps, when the National Research Council (NRC) of the National Academy of Sciences evaluated the economic impact of immigration in its landmark 1997 study *The New Americans: Economic, Demographic, and Fiscal Effects of Immigration*, it found only a small negative impact on the earnings of Americans, and even then, only for workers at lower skill and education levels.

Moreover, the participation of immigrants in the labor force has had obvious positive effects. The NRC estimated that roughly 5 percent of household expenditures in the U.S. went to goods and services produced by immigrant labor—labor whose relative

* I was briefly president of U.S. English in the late 1980's but resigned when a previously undisclosed memo written by Tanton was published. In it, he warned of problems related to the "educability" of Hispanics and speculated that an influx of Catholics from south of the border might well lead the U.S. to "pitch out" the concept of church-state separation. Tanton was forced to resign as chairman of U.S. English and no longer has any affiliation with the group.

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cheapness translated into lower prices for everything from chicken to new homes. These price advantages, the study found, were "spread quite uniformly across most types of domestic consumers," with a slightly greater benefit for higher-income households.

Many restrictionists argue that if Americans would simply cut their own lawns, clean their own houses, and care for their own children, there would be no need for immigrant labor. But even if this were true, the overall economy would hardly benefit from having fewer workers. If American women were unable to rely on immigrants to perform some household duties, more of them would be forced to stay home. A smaller labor force would also have devastating consequences when it comes to dealing with the national debt and government-funded entitlements like Social Security and Medicare, a point repeatedly made by former Federal Reserve Board Chairman Alan Greenspan. As he told a Senate committee in 2003, "short of a major increase in immigration, economic growth cannot be safely counted upon to eliminate deficits and the difficult choices that will be required to restore fiscal discipline." The following year, Greenspan noted that offsetting the fiscal effects of our own declining birthrate would require a level of immigration "much larger than almost all current projections assume."

THE CONTRIBUTIONS that immigrants make to the economy must be weighed, of course, against the burdens they impose. FAIR and other restrictionist groups contend that immigrants are a huge drain on society because of the cost of providing public services to them—some $67 to $87 billion a year, according to one commonly cited study. Drawing on numbers from the NRC's 1997 report, FAIR argues that "the net fiscal drain on American taxpayers [from immigration] is between $166 and $226 a year per native household."

There is something to these assertions, though less than may at first appear. Much of the anxiety and resentment generated by immigrants is, indeed, a result of the very real costs they impose on state and local governments, especially in border states like California and Arizona. Providing education and health care to the children of immigrants is particularly expensive, and the federal government picks up only a fraction of the expense. But, again, there are countervailing factors. Illegal immigrants are hardly free-riders. An estimated three-quarters of them paid federal taxes in 2002, amounting to $7 billion in Social Security contributions and $1.5 billion in Medicare taxes, plus withholding for income taxes. They also pay state and local sales taxes and (as homeowners and renters) property taxes.

Moreover, FAIR and its ilk have a penchant for playing fast and loose with numbers. To support its assessment of immigration's overall fiscal burden, for instance, FAIR ignores the explicit cautions in a later NRC report about cross-sectional analyses that exclude the "concurrent descendants" of immigrants—that is, their adult children. These, overwhelmingly, are productive members of the workforce. As the NRC notes, when this more complete picture is taken into account, immigrants have "a positive federal impact of about $1,260 [per capita], exceeding their net cost [$680 per capita on average] at the state and local levels." Restrictionists also argue that fewer immigrants would mean more opportunities for low-skilled native workers. Of late, groups like the Minuteman Project have even taken to presenting themselves as champions of unemployed American blacks (a curious tactic, to say the least, considering the views on race and ethnicity of many in the anti-immigrant camp*).

But here, too, the factual evidence is mixed. Wages for Americans workers who have less than a high-school education have probably been adversely affected by large-scale immigration; the economist George Borjas estimates a reduction of 8 percent in hourly wages for native-born males in that category. But price competition is not the only reason that many employers favor immigrants over poorly educated natives. Human capital includes motivation, and there could hardly be two more disparately motivated groups than U.S.-born high-school drop-outs and their foreign-born rivals in the labor market. Young American men usually leave high school because they become involved with drugs or crime, have difficulty with authority, cannot maintain regular hours, or struggle with learning. Immigrants, on the other hand, have demonstrated enormous initiative, reflecting, in the words of President Reagan, "a special kind of courage that enabled them to leave their own land, leave their friends and their countrymen, and come to this new and strange land."

Just as important, they possess a strong desire to work. Legal immigrants have an 86-percent rate of participation in the labor force; illegal immigrant males have a 94-percent rate. By contrast, among white males with less than a high-school education,

* As the author and anti-immigration activist Peter Brimelow wrote in his 1995 book *Alien Nation*, "Americans have a legitimate interest in their country's racial balance . . . [and] a right to insist that their government stop shifting it." Himself an immigrant from England, Brimelow wants "more immigrants who look like me."

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the participation rate is 46 percent, while among blacks it is 40 percent. If all immigrants, or even only illegal aliens, disappeared from the American workforce, can anyone truly believe that poorly skilled whites and blacks would fill the gap? To the contrary, productivity would likely decline, and employers in many sectors would simply move their operations to countries like Mexico, China, and the Philippines, where many of our immigrants come from in the first place.

OF EQUAL weight among foes of immigration are the cultural changes wrought by today's newcomers, especially those from Mexico. In his book *Who Are We? The Challenges to National Identity* (2004), the eminent political scientist Samuel P. Huntington warns that "Mexican immigration is leading toward the demographic *reconquista* of areas Americans took from Mexico by force in the 1830's and 1840's." Others have fretted about the aims of militant Mexican-American activists, pointing to "El Plan de Aztlan," a radical Hispanic manifesto hatched in 1969, which calls for "the control of our barrios, campos, pueblos, lands, our economy, our culture, and our political life," including "self-defense against the occupying forces of the oppressors"—that is, the U.S. government.

To be sure, the fantasy of a recaptured homeland exists mostly in the minds of a handful of already well-assimilated Mexican-American college professors and the students they manage to indoctrinate (self-described "victims" who often enjoy preferential admission to college and subsidized or free tuition). But such rhetoric understandably alarms many Americans, especially in light of the huge influx of Hispanic immigrants into the Southwest. Does it not seem likely that today's immigrants—because of their numbers, the constant flow of even more newcomers, and their proximity to their countries of origin—will be unable or unwilling to assimilate as previous ethnic groups have done?

There is no question that some public policies in the U.S. have actively discouraged assimilation. Bilingual education, the dominant method of instruction of Hispanic immigrant children for some 30 years, is the most obvious culprit, with its emphasis on retaining Spanish. But bilingual education is on the wane, having been challenged by statewide initiatives in California (1998), Arizona (2000), and Massachusetts (2004), and by policy shifts in several major cities and at the federal level. States that have moved to English-immersion instruction have seen test scores for Hispanic youngsters rise, in some cases substantially.

Evidence from the culture at large is also encouraging. On most measures of social and economic integration, Hispanic immigrants and their descendants have made steady strides up the ladder. English is the preferred language of virtually all U.S.-born Hispanics; indeed, according to a 2002 national survey by the Pew Hispanic Center and the Kaiser Family Foundation, 78 percent of third-generation Mexican-Americans cannot speak Spanish at all. In education, 86 percent of U.S.-born Hispanics complete high school, compared with 92 percent of non-Hispanic whites, and the drop-out rate among immigrant children who enroll in high school after they come here is no higher than for the native-born.

It remains true that attendance at four-year colleges is lower among Hispanics than for other groups, and Hispanics lag in attaining bachelor's degrees. But neither that nor their slightly lower rate of high-school attendance has kept Hispanic immigrants from pulling their economic weight. After controlling for education, English proficiency, age, and geographic location, Mexican-born males actually earn 2.4 percent *more* than comparable U.S.-born white males, according to a recent analysis of 2000 Census data by the National Research Council. Hispanic women, for their part, hold their own against U.S.-born white women with similar qualifications.

As for the effect of Hispanic immigrants on the country's social fabric, the NRC found that they are more likely than other Americans to live with their immediate relatives: 88.6 percent of Mexican immigrant households are made up of families, compared with 69.5 percent of non-Hispanic whites and 68.3 percent of blacks. These differences are partially attributable to the age structure of the Hispanic population, which is younger on average than the white or black population. But even after adjusting for age and immigrant generation, U.S. residents of Hispanic origin—and especially those from Mexico—are much more likely to live in family households. Despite increased out-of-wedlock births among Hispanics, about 67 percent of American children of Mexican origin live in two-parent families, as compared with 77 percent of white children but only 37 percent of black children.

Perhaps the strongest indicator of Hispanic integration into American life is the population's high rate of intermarriage. About a quarter of all Hispanics marry outside their ethnic group, almost exclusively to non-Hispanic white spouses, a rate that has remained virtually unchanged since 1980. And here a significant fact has been noted in a 2005

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study by the Population Reference Bureau—namely, that "the majority of inter-Hispanic children are reported as Hispanic." Such intermarriages themselves, the study goes on, "may have been a factor in the phenomenal growth of the U.S. Hispanic population in recent years."

It has been widely predicted that, by mid-century, Hispanics will represent fully a quarter of the U.S. population. Such predictions fail to take into account that increasing numbers of these "Hispanics" will have only one grandparent or great-grandparent of Hispanic heritage. By that point, Hispanic ethnicity may well mean neither more nor less than German, Italian, or Irish ethnicity means today.

How, then, to proceed? Congress is under growing pressure to strengthen border control, but unless it also reaches some agreement on more comprehensive reforms, stauncher enforcement is unlikely to have much of an effect. With a growing economy and more jobs than our own population can readily absorb, the U.S. will continue to need immigrants. Illegal immigration already responds reasonably well to market forces. It has increased during boom times like the late 1990's and decreased again when jobs disappear, as in the latest recession. Trying to determine an ideal number makes no more sense than trying to predict how much steel or how many textiles we ought to import; government quotas can never match the efficiency of simple supply and demand. As President Bush has argued—and as the Senate has now agreed—a guest-worker program is the way to go.

Does this mean the U.S. should just open its borders to anyone who wants to come? Hardly. We still need an orderly process, one that includes background checks to insure that terrorists and criminals are not being admitted. It also makes sense to require that immigrants have at least a basic knowledge of English and to give preference to those who have advanced skills or needed talents.

Moreover, immigrants themselves have to take more responsibility for their status. Illegal aliens from Mexico now pay significant sums of money to "coyotes" who sneak them across the border. If they could come legally as guest workers, that same money might be put up as a surety bond to guarantee their return at the end of their employment contract, or perhaps to pay for health insurance. Nor is it good policy to allow immigrants to become welfare recipients or to benefit from affirmative action: restrictions on both sorts of programs have to be written into law and stringently applied.

A market-driven guest-worker program might be arranged in any number of ways. A proposal devised by the Vernon K. Krieble Foundation, a policy group based in Colorado, suggests that government-licensed, private-sector employment agencies be put in charge of administering the effort, setting up offices in other countries to process applicants and perform background checks. Workers would be issued tamper-proof identity cards only after signing agreements that would allow for deportation if they violated the terms of their contract or committed crimes in the U.S. Although the Krieble plan would offer no path to citizenship, workers who wanted to change their status could still apply for permanent residency and, ultimately, citizenship through the normal, lengthy process.

Do such schemes stand a chance politically? A poll commissioned by the Krieble Foundation found that most Americans (except those with less than a high-school education) consider an "efficient system for handling guest workers" to be more important than expanded law enforcement in strengthening the country's border. Similarly, a CNN tracking poll in May found that 81 percent of respondents favored legislation permitting illegal immigrants who have been in the U.S. more than five years to stay here and apply for citizenship, provided they had jobs and paid back taxes. True, other polls have contradicted these results, suggesting public ambivalence on the issue—and an openness to persuasion.

Regardless of what Congress does or does not do—the odds in favor of an agreement between the Senate and House on final legislation are still no better than 50-50—immigration is likely to continue at high levels for the foreseeable future. Barring a recession or another terrorist attack, the U.S. economy is likely to need some 1.5 to 2 million immigrants a year for some time to come. It would be far better for all concerned if those who wanted to work in the U.S. and had jobs waiting for them here could do so legally, in the light of day and with the full approval of the American people.

In 1918, at the height of the last great wave of immigrants and the hysteria that it prompted in some circles, Madison Grant, a Yale-educated eugenicist and leader of the immigration-restriction movement, made a prediction:

> The result of unlimited immigration is showing plainly in the rapid decline in the birth rate of native Americans because the poorer classes of colonial stock, where they still exist, will not bring children into the world to com-

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> pete in the labor market with the Slovak, the Italian, the Syrian, and the Jew. . . . The man of the old stock is being crowded out of many country districts by these foreigners, just as he is today being literally driven off the streets of New York City by the swarms of Polish Jews. These immigrants adopt the language of the native American, they wear his clothes, they steal his name, and they are beginning to take his women, but they seldom adopt his religion or understand his ideals, and while he is being elbowed out of his own home, the American looks calmly abroad and urges on others the suicidal ethics which are exterminating his own race.

Today, such alarmism reads as little more than a historical curiosity. Southern and Eastern European immigrants and their children did, in fact, assimilate, and in certain cases—most prominently that of the Jews—they exceeded the educational and economic attainments of Grant's "colonial stock."

Present-day restrictionists point to all sorts of special circumstances that supposedly made such acculturation possible in the past but render it impossible today. Then as now, however, the restrictionists are wrong, not least in their failure to understand the basic dynamic of American nationhood. There is no denying the challenge posed by assimilating today's newcomers, especially so many of them in so short a span of time. Nor is there any denying the cultural forces, mainly stemming from the Left, that have attenuated the sense of national identity among native-born American elites themselves and led to such misguided policies as bilingual education. But, provided that we commit ourselves to the goal, past experience and progress to date suggest the task is anything but impossible.

As jarring as many found the recent pictures of a million illegal aliens marching in our cities, the fact remains that many of the immigrants were carrying the American flag, and waving it proudly. They and their leaders understand what most restrictionists do not and what some Americans have forgotten or choose to deny: that the price of admission to America is, and must be, the willingness to become an American.

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Searching for the House of David

Hillel Halkin

ALTHOUGH MODERN archeology is a reasonably rigorous scientific discipline, it is subject to non-scientific constraints. In the first place, it is expensive. To excavate a small area whose earliest strata of human settlement lie far beneath the surface can cost large sums of money. Even if the diggers comprise students and other volunteers, they have to be transported to the site, housed, and fed; professionals like photographers and map drawers must be employed; excavated objects need to be carefully cleaned, catalogued, and stored; and in some cases, exotic experts like archeo-zoologists and archeo-botanists have to be brought in. As a rule, moreover, all this is done on an inefficient, drawn out, stop-and-start basis. A process in which every bucket of earth must be sifted and examined, and in which it is impossible to work in bad weather or during rainy seasons, may require a dig to go on for years—at the end of which its findings and conclusions must be published in numerous volumes crammed with intricate drawings and illustrations.

Other sciences, of course, can involve even more expensive research. But whereas such research may be financed by governments or businesses hoping to reap commensurate returns, archeology, apart from an occasional contribution to tourism, yields only knowledge of the past. Moreover, when excavating in urban or built-up areas, even well-funded archeologists are restricted in their choice of sites. They cannot generally demolish existing buildings to get at what is beneath them, and the threat of further development hangs preemptively over their work. (New construction can itself lead to archeological discoveries, but these must be followed up by emergency digs that rarely have time for thoroughness.) As a result, archeologists often cannot excavate in places they consider the most promising and frequently must make do with exploratory shafts that may miss findings of great value by small distances.

All this helps to explain why a dispute that has been going on in biblical studies for decades has not been settled by archeological evidence long ago. Itself part of a larger argument over the historical reliability of the entire Bible, the dispute has centered on the biblical figures of David and Solomon and has involved dozens of Israeli, European, and American scholars—two of whom, Israel Finkelstein of Tel Aviv University and Eilat Mazar of the Shalem Center in Jerusalem, are now facing off in a crucial battle over Mazar's latest dig.

FINKELSTEIN IS the most prominent of a group of contemporary archeologists, sometimes lumped together as "biblical revisionists," who

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hold among other things that King David (conventionally said to have ruled ca. 1010-970 B.C.E.) and his son Solomon (ca. 970-930), while genuine historical figures, were never the powerful monarchs and grand builders of the united north-south monarchy in ancient Palestine that the Bible tells us was established by them and fell apart after their deaths.[1] Rather, Finkelstein maintains, the two were little more than the petty warlords of a small southern kingdom alone, and were turned into grand legends hundred of years afterward by a religiously and politically motivated campaign of glorification.

In *The Bible Unearthed* (2001), the first of two books that he has written for lay readers together with the American scholar Neil Asher Silberman, Finkelstein made the case for this thesis in a single chapter entitled "Memories of a Golden Age?" Now, in *David and Solomon: In Search of the Bible's Sacred Kings and the Roots of the Western Tradition*,[2] he has re-stated his position in greater detail and with a more comprehensive theoretical structure.

This structure begins, as Finkelstein argued in *The Bible Unearthed*, not with David and Solomon but far earlier in the Bible's account of things: namely, with the stories found in the books of Genesis, Exodus, Deuteronomy, and Joshua. These tell of the Patriarchs, Israel's enslavement in Egypt, its liberation from bondage, and its conquest of Canaan. During the heyday of traditionalist biblical archeology in the half-century between 1920 and 1970, these stories were generally considered, if not provable, at least plausible in terms of what was known about the historical periods in which they supposedly took place.

And yet, Finkelstein contended in *The Bible Unearthed*, not only had three decades of intensive archeological excavation in the years after the 1967 war, both in Israel proper and in the West Bank, failed to turn up the slightest evidence to confirm the biblical account, but the account itself is riddled with anachronisms that place its composition long after the events it refers to. Furthermore, an analysis of those anachronisms points to the 7th-century B.C.E. kingdom of Judah and, especially, to the reign in Jerusalem of King Josiah, a religious reformer lauded by the book of Kings for his zealous monotheism, as the period in which the Bible's core narrative was shaped and put into writing.

Not all of this would be challenged by today's archaeological "traditionalists." Most would agree that the historical existence of the Patriarchs, the sojourn in Egypt, and the Exodus has yet to be demonstrated, although some would balk at saying the same of the conquest of Canaan. (It is no longer as clear as it was once thought to be that there is a widespread pattern of destruction of 13th- and 12th-century B.C.E. Canaanite towns indicative of a foreign invasion in what would have been the age of Joshua, but there are archeologists who still believe that such a pattern is detectable.) The battle lines begin to be clearly drawn only when, passing over the book of Judges, we come, some 200 years after the purported time of Joshua, to the books of Samuel and Kings. Here Finkelstein and those who agree with him part ways with the traditionalists sharply.

IN *David and Solomon*, Finkelstein first explains why, in his opinion, the real David and Solomon were no more than "local chiefs," and why their history was later so grandiosely rewritten. For one thing, he writes, in the 10th century their capital of Jerusalem was a small town in the southern hill country of Palestine—one that has yielded, despite numerous excavations, no archeological remains testifying to the monumental building that the Bible attributes to them and that would be expected of the wealthy rulers of a large kingdom. Nor, he maintains, is there any reason to hold, as was once widely assumed to be the case, that the massive construction found outside of Jerusalem, in such northern sites as Megiddo and Hazor, should itself be assigned to the 10th-century reign of Solomon; in fact, it dates somewhat later to the 9th and early 8th centuries.[3]

[1] Finkelstein himself objects to being called a "revisionist" and prefers to be known as an "archeological centrist," standing halfway between the radical "minimalists," on the one hand, and the conservative "traditionalists," on the other. He differs from such minimalists as the European scholars Philip Davies and Niels Peter Lemche both in a greater willingness to concede a possible measure of truth to biblical traditions that cannot be proved archeologically, and in an earlier dating of many biblical books that the minimalists assign to periods as late as the third and second centuries B.C.E. Many minimalists once denied the historicity of David and Solomon altogether, a position from which they were made to retreat by the discovery of the "Tel Dan stele": an Aramaic text, carved in stone in approximately 835 B.C.E., that was unearthed by archeologists in northern Israel in 1993. In the text, Hazael king of Damascus boasts of a victory in battle over a combined force led by "Jehoram son of Ahab," king of the northern kingdom of Israel, and "Ahaziahu of the house of David," king of the southern kingdom of Judah. The text is now generally accepted as proof of David's (and therefore Solomon's) historical existence.

[2] Free Press, 352 pp., $26.00.

[3] Finkelstein's reasons for re-dating these sites, set forth more completely in articles in archeological journals, are complex and based heavily on analyses of the pottery found in different strata. They have been rejected by traditionalists who continue to defend the older chronology.

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Moreover, Finkelstein contends, the southern hills, of which Jerusalem was the largest settlement, were in David and Solomon's age a poor and sparsely settled area that could not possibly have supplied the resources or manpower for the army and administration needed to conquer and control the richer and more populous north, let alone the additional territories in Palestine, Transjordan, and Syria said to have been ruled by these two biblical heroes. Not only that, but the development, in a region traditionally dominated by Egypt, of independent monarchies like the northern kingdom of Israel, the Syrian kingdom of Aram, and the kingdoms of Ammon and Moab east of the Jordan, was a distinctly 9th-century phenomenon that emerged from a temporary power vacuum caused by Egyptian weakness. For demographic and economic reasons, finally, neither an independent southern kingdom nor a north-south monarchy controlled by it could have arisen before an independent kingdom in the north. Indeed, the archeology of both regions has shown that northern Palestine came under centralized rule at an earlier stage than did Jerusalem and the south.

Why, then, close to 300 years after David and Solomon's lifetimes, was a false memory of their greatness born? Finkelstein connects this myth, as he conceives of it, with two historical developments. The first was the destruction, in the late 8th century, of the northern kingdom by the new empire of Assyria, an event that flooded the south with northern refugees while freeing it of its more powerful northern rival that had kept it from expanding territorially. This it now began to do under kings Hezekiah (716-687), Manasseh (687-642), and Josiah (639-609), who imposed on their subjects extremes of taxation, military service, and obedience to a state apparatus never demanded of them before. The second development was concentrated in the reign of Josiah, who launched, partly in order to strengthen his own centralized rule, an all-out campaign against polytheism and idol worship on behalf of the Temple cult in Jerusalem and its strict monotheism.

Seventh-century Judah was thus a society, Finkelstein writes, in which great transitions were taking place and whose kings were in need of ideological rationalizations for them. To integrate the growing number of northerners in the south, they sought to foster a new "pan-Hebraic" identity, based on a re-imagined past shared by northern Israelites and southern Judahites alike. To justify the growing power of the Judahite state and the zealotry of Josiah's reforms, they presented them not as the radical new departures they were, but as a harking back to an exemplary period of national grandeur.

The vehicles chosen for this, so Finkelstein believes, were the personages of David and Solomon, placed by the royal scribes of late-8th- and 7th-century Judah at the culmination of a divine saga that begins with the age of the Patriarchs. On the one hand, being elevated into great potentates who united the northern and southern tribes at the outset of their political histories, they promulgated an ideal of national unity now restored after long and lamentable centuries of internecine strife among the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. On the other hand, being depicted as ambitious rulers who forged powerful governments in the service of a monotheistic God and of the magnificent Temple they had built,[4] they were held up as ancient heroes in whose path a king like Josiah was commendably trying to follow. Literary greatness aside, the Bible, and especially the books of Samuel and Kings, need to be viewed as Judahite ruling-class spin.

David and Solomon is carefully thought out and well argued. It presents, from a "centrist" perspective, the problems posed by the biblical account of the rise of the House of David and offers persuasive and historically credible solutions to them. Yet because that persuasiveness rests to a considerable extent on the absence of archeological evidence—the absence, that is, of the grand edifices, especially in Jerusalem, that the David and Solomon of the Bible would have had to have erected—it stands on an Achilles heel. Were any such evidence to turn up, the entire argument would be hobbled. Even an archeologist as confident of his opinions as Finkelstein must have known that he was taking this risk in writing *David and Solomon*. And yet not even a less confident archeologist could have imagined that, before the manuscript of his book had reached the printer's, a colleague would announce that she had found, not only such a piece of evidence, but a piece of the most spectacular kind.

IN THE biblical story, David is not the first Hebrew king. He succeeds the tragic Saul, whose suspicions of David's disloyalty have caused the younger man to flee to the rugged frontiers of Judah, where he lives the life of a Robin Hood-like bandit chief. After Saul's death in battle with the Philistines, David is crowned king by his support-

[4] Although Finkelstein allows that the Temple in Jerusalem may originally have been Solomonic, he argues that in the 10th century it would have been a simple structure, to be lavishly renovated only at a later date.

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ers in Hebron, a town in the far south of Judah. There he rules for seven years before capturing Jerusalem, a city farther north, inhabited by a people called the Jebusites, which he makes his capital. Chapter 5 of the second book of Samuel tells us:

> So David dwelt in the fortress [of Jerusalem], and called it [Jerusalem] the city of David. And David built round about from the Millo and inward. And David went on, and grew great, and the Lord God of Hosts was with him. And Hiram king of Tyre sent messengers to David, and cedar trees, and carpenters, and masons; and they built David a house.

Since the second half of the 19th century, when the first archeological excavations in Jerusalem commenced, it has been universally accepted that the ancient site of the "city of David" was located, not within the Ottoman walls of Jerusalem's present-day Old City but right outside those walls, several hundred yards to the south of their southeastern corner. At this point, running downhill in a north-south direction, there is a narrow ridge, surrounded by steep valleys on its eastern, western, and southern sides; only to the north, where the ridge continues to rise gradually until it meets the Old City's southern wall and widens out into the Temple Mount, would it have been militarily difficult to defend against enemies in David's time. This generally advantageous topography made it a desirable site for an ancient city; so did its proximity to water, always a problem in a country where rains fall for only half the year. In the Kidron valley to the east of it there is a perennial water source, known in the Bible and still today as the Gihon spring, that was able to supply the city's needs throughout the summer dry season.

Here, then, the Jebusites had lived. Here, too, sections of the wall of pre-Davidic Jerusalem were believed to have been found, including the biblical "Millo"—a Hebrew word meaning landfill and referring to an eastward extension of the ridge's narrow width, partly supported by a massive, sloped retaining wall; known as "the stepped stone structure," this has been excavated near the northeast tip of the city of David. And here, presumably along the line of their northern defensive wall, where Jerusalem was most vulnerable, the Jebusites had built—so the Bible tells us—a fortress to help protect it. It was in this fortress that David is said to have first resided after conquering the city and before he moved to a palace built for him by his new ally, the Phoenician king Hiram, who provided materials, techniques, and skilled workers that could not be found in Jerusalem at the time.

As Finkelstein and others have never tired of pointing out, however, no traces of either this fortress or palace have ever turned up, despite repeated attempts to find them. Although much was added to the archeological knowledge of ancient Jerusalem after the city of David passed into Israeli hands in 1967, the following summation of the traditionalist-minded British archeologist Kathleen Kenyon, who had dug extensively there in the early 1960's, still seemed true nearly four decades later:

> It may seem disappointing that the excavations have discovered none of the buildings of David's city. . . . Within the area to which we now know that David's city was limited, virtually no area remains in which there is any hope of finds of the period. . . . For a distance of 120 meters south from the northern limit, the whole width of the summit has been excavated by earlier expeditions. . . . The result is the virtual disappearance of all except fragments of the early walls, and the mangling and disturbance of the floor levels and occupation deposits. . . . The whole of this area must therefore be written off as far as any knowledge of early Jerusalem is concerned.

If anything, Kenyon's last sentence would ring even truer nearly 40 years later, because meanwhile more and more Palestinian houses had been built on the site, and there was less and less room to dig. And so when it first struck Eilat Mazar, the granddaughter of the renowned Israeli archeologist Benjamin Mazar, that David's palace might still be found because it had hitherto been looked for in the wrong place, she could find no one to sponsor her financially, not even after publishing an unusual appeal, in a 1997 issue of *Biblical Archeological Review*, entitled "Excavate David's Palace!"

MAZAR'S THEORY was based on precisely the sort of biblical clue that anti-traditionalists refuse to consider meaningful—that is, on another passage from Samuel II, chapter 5. This one reads:

> And when the Philistines heard that David had been anointed king over [all] Israel [in Jerusalem], all the Philistines marched up [from the coastal plain] in search of David. But David heard of it, and he went down to the fortress.

The words that set Mazar to thinking were "went down." If the Jebusite fortress was at the northern, upper end of Jerusalem, how could David have gone "down" to it from the palace Hiram had built

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for him? He could have done so only if his palace were even higher up along the ridge toward the Temple Mount. This would have placed it outside the city walls, a seemingly illogical location exposing it to an attack like that of the Philistines—which was why no one had bothered to search for it there. When, in the early 1920's, the British archeologists R.A. Macalister and J. Garrow Duncan had dug in the area and found the ruins of ancient walls, they automatically deemed them to be Jebusite.

But Mazar reasoned differently. The Jebusite city, archeology showed, had been small and presumably crowded, so that David would have had to raze a large part of it in order to build a new royal compound. And if he was already planning (as the book of Samuel tells us he was) to build a house of worship on the Temple Mount, this in any case would have meant expanding the city northward and, eventually, walling in the expansion. Meanwhile, his palace would have its own defenses; if a formidable foe approached, there would be enough warning time to evacuate it for the fortress below. Besides, previous excavators had found curious things, such as a well-preserved proto-Ionic capital discovered by Kenyon to the north of the "stepped-stone structure." Kenyon had thought that this crowning portion of a column or gateway, which was of unusual magnificence, might be "Solomonic," but had no idea where it had fallen from. Why not, Mazar now asked, from David's palace?

It was an intriguing notion, but it had no buyers. Almost another decade had to pass before the Shalem Center offered to fund the dig; the project, underwritten by the American philanthropist Roger Hertog, broke ground in February 2005. In part because Mazar and her team worked unusually quickly, and in part because she reached bedrock closer to the surface than anticipated, she finished excavating the area at her disposal within a few months. By last summer she was making newspaper headlines—"King David's Palace Is Found, Archeologist Says," declared the *New York Times*—and in the January/February 2006 issue of *Biblical Archeology Review* she published a first account of her findings. Although, she repeated there, it was still too early to be absolutely sure, she was reasonably convinced that she had found the remains of the "house" built for David by Hiram.

PILES OF stones do not speak for themselves, and archeological excavations are generally disappointing to the untrained eye. Yet, standing in Mazar's excavation, which is roughly the size and shape of a junior-high-school basketball court sunk some fifteen feet into the ground, one is immediately struck by two things. The first is the luck of there having been space for her to dig at all. To the east of the excavation are the "stepped stone structure" and a steep slope. To the north and south are Palestinian houses and their gardens, built since Kathleen Kenyon's day. To the west is a "David's City Visitors Center" owned by the Ir David Association, a Jewish settlers' group that has been buying up property in the area. Mazar could dig at all only because the association placed part of its land at her disposal.

One's second impression is that whatever it is that she has unearthed, it is indeed the remains of something grand. At eye level are the bottoms of huge stone walls, six to eight feet in width, running off into the unexcavated earth all around. While it is impossible to calculate just what sort of structure they were meant to be the foundations of, it clearly occupied a considerably larger area than the 3,000 square feet that have been explored so far and must have risen to a height of more than one story.

Could this structure have been, as Macalister and Duncan thought, part of the Jebusite city wall? Mazar thinks not, the reason being that in places where she has cleared the foundation stones down to the bedrock, she has found broken pottery of the so-called Iron Age I period that she dates to the 12th and 11th centuries B.C.E. Since the stones could not possibly have been laid earlier than that, a "Jebusite" interpretation of them would mean that, sometime in the 200 years before David's conquest of Jerusalem, the city's rulers decided to replace its existing northern defenses with new ones at the cost of an enormous investment. They would have had no evident motive for doing so. And at the same time, the walls Mazar has found are located where the Bible tells us David's palace was built: "round about from the Millo" and higher up than the Jebusite fortress.

Could these walls date to a period *after* David's, and thus be the foundations of a royal building erected by later kings—perhaps the same 7th-century ones who play such a key role in Finkelstein's historical reconstruction? Mazar rules this out because of another find: pottery vessels, including a largely intact little juglet, identifiable as 10th- or 9th-century Cypriot in provenance, whose presence in 7th-century foundations would be as hard to explain as that of a French Revolution-period teacup in the substructure of a 1970 Man-

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hattan high-rise. On the other hand, she says, there is definite evidence that the structure in question was still in use even later than the 7th century, if not as a royal palace then at least as a royal office building. For the dig's most dramatic discovery so far is a bulla—a small clay impression commonly used in ancient times as a personal seal—that bears on it the stamp "Yehuchal ben Shelemiyahu," a name occurring in the book of Jeremiah as that of an official at the court of Josiah's son Zedekiah (598-587).

Finkelstein, who has visited the dig, is not convinced. Although he agrees that the foundations are of an early Judahite building, he places that building "between the late 10th century and ca. 800 B.C.E.," and disputes Mazar's dating of the bedrock pottery. Moreover, he argues, the building could not have been David's palace, because royal palaces in the ancient Near East were always built adjacent to temples; if David was planning to situate his temple on the Temple Mount, he would have built his palace closer to there. Most probably, Finkelstein believes, Mazar has unearthed a royal administrative center constructed by a 9th-century Judahite king, one seeking to create a southern copy of the bureaucratic state already existing in the north.

And here, for the time being, matters rest. Mazar is planning to expand her dig, following the foundations she has uncovered westward into the Ir David Visitors Center. It is anybody's guess what she will find there. If it is not the archeological equivalent of a knockout blow, such as a datable inscription like the Tel Dan stele, the battle will go on and eventually have to be decided on points—that is, on the basis of pottery analysis, stratigraphic considerations, radiocarbon tests, issues of historical plausibility, and all the other factors that enter into archeological debates. These debates can last for a very long time. Meanwhile, the newspapers have moved on to other matters.

WHETHER OR not Mazar has found David's palace is certainly a question of historical import. Yet it is perhaps not quite as important historically as it might seem at first glance. All in all, Mazar and Finkelstein's opinions regarding the history of ancient Israel do not differ enormously. Both would agree that the archeological record has little positive to say about this history before the time of David. Mazar's David is—as the Bible depicts him—the first Hebrew ruler of the southern hill country of Palestine; so is Finkelstein's. A strong Judahite state first arose, according to Mazar, in the early 10th century; according to Finkelstein, in the mid- to late 9th. Starting with the 9th century, both agree again that the Bible's account of Judahite and Israelite kings, and of their wars, victories, and defeats, is in its bare outlines correct. All in all, they are quarreling about some 100 to 150 years of biblical history. This does not set them worlds apart.

Because it does not, their dispute does not have quite the contemporary political ramifications that have been attributed to it, either. True, a categorical dismissal of the Bible's historicity has been linked in some circles, both academic and political, to pro-Palestinian positions and to the assertion that the Jewish claim to the "land of Israel" is historically fraudulent, there having been, so it is said, no Jewish people in that land until the last centuries before Jesus.

But such sweeping "Bible denial," whose echoes were audible in Yasir Arafat's lunatic declaration that the Temple Mount was never a Jewish site, has been restricted to the more radical biblical minimalists and has nothing to do with Finkelstein or any other reputable archeologist. Rationally considered, the Jewish right to a country in which, by any measured archeological judgment, Jews have a history of over 3,000 years can hardly be compromised by a disagreement over how much power and territory were possessed by two of that history's kings, no matter how great their significance in a tradition that continued to turn them into legends long after the biblical period. (In rabbinic midrash, for example, David is pictured as a great Torah scholar.) For their part, less than rational minds will go on denying this right even if Eilat Mazar finds a crown with David's name on it. (*The palace is David's? Ah, yes, but you see, this David was a Canaanite king whose story the Jews stole. . . .*) Willful malice and ignorance are not to be discouraged by anything so trivial as an archeological excavation.

Similarly, the dispute cannot be said to bear heavily on issues of religious belief. On the contrary: those who read the Bible through believing eyes have no need for archeological confirmation, and every reason not to seek it. To do so would be to substitute archeology for faith, with fatal consequences for the latter. Even if Mazar should be proved right, the same science that vindicates the biblical account of David will still cast doubt on the biblical account of Joshua. What could be gained by such a victory?

And yet faith, it must be said, is not a central concept in the Hebrew Bible, even if it is very

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much so in the Christian New Testament. While it plays a crucial role in the story of Abraham, who is in every sense a man of faith, he is unique in this respect. Unlike Abraham, who is asked to believe in a God Who has not yet proved Himself, other major characters in the Bible are asked to serve a God Who has. What is tested in them is the courage to follow God *after* He has been made manifest in their experience.

Apart from the participants in the exodus from Egypt and the theophany at Sinai, the biblical people of Israel as a whole have no such God-experience of their own. But they too are not asked to have faith. Rather, they are asked to remember the experiences of others. And this they are enjoined to do over and over again, as in chapter 8 of the book of Deuteronomy, in which Moses exhorts not only the Israelites in the desert but all their descendants:

> And thou shalt remember all the way in which the Lord thy God led thee these 40 years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldst keep His commandments or no. . . . Beware that thou forget not the Lord thy God, in not keeping His commandments, and His judgments, and His statutes, which I command thee this day. . . . But thou shalt remember the Lord thy God, for it is He that giveth thee power to prosper, that He may establish His covenant, which He swore unto thy fathers.

To remember is the supreme commandment of the Bible, not because forgetting is worse than murdering, committing adultery, or doing anything else that one is commanded not to do, but because when one forgets one no longer knows why one has been commanded.

BUT HUMAN memory is a pitiful tool. What do we remember even of our own lives? A tiny fraction of a fraction—and the farther back we go, the tinier it becomes. Of yesterday, much. Of last week, less. Of ten or twenty years ago, very little. Of our childhoods, next to nothing. If we can recall a half-dozen tangible things from our fourth or fifth year of life, we consider ourselves fortunate. And how joyful we are if we manage to salvage one more such recollection, wresting it from the oblivion into which it has fallen! We treasure it as a child treasures a coin that has been extracted with great difficulty through the grating of a sidewalk.

The scandal of memory is how it lets our lives slip away even as we live them, let alone the lives of those who came before us.

This is what inspires the great monuments of antiquity. To be remembered! To be remembered when all else is forgotten! By a pyramid. By an inscription. *I am Tukulti-Urta, king of the universe, the mighty king, king of Assyria, king of Sumer and Akkad, king of the four regions, favorite of Assur and Shamash. . . .*

And so, after a fashion, we remember Tukulti-Urta, who lived about 1250 B.C.E. There are many like him in the history books. But the Bible is the first book in history that asks us to remember, not just the public deeds of great men, but their private experience as well. It asks us to believe that this experience has something to do with our own. *And it came to pass in an eveningtide that David rose from off his bed, and walked upon the roof of the king's house, and from the roof he saw a woman washing herself, and the woman was very beautiful to look upon. . . .*

This is not history. But it is not religious myth, either. It is a supposed memory from roughly the age of Tukulti-Urta. *And the Lord sent Nathan unto David. And he came unto him and said unto him . . . Wherefore hast thou despised the commandments of the Lord, to do evil in His sight, that thou hast killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword, and hast taken his wife to be thy wife?*

The narrative books of the Bible are a collection of such supposed memories, handed down faithfully for thousands of years. These memories are themselves the most infinitesimal part of the most infinitesimal part of what happened to the human race in those years, a handful of coins extracted through all the gratings of all the sidewalks in all possible universes. And yet they are, the Bible improbably asks us to believe, memories of the most important things that ever happened to humanity.

One thus does not have to be a religious believer to comprehend the mockery involved if all this remembering has been of nothing—if its memories are, like many of the "memories" of our childhoods, false ones, stories imagined, perhaps in the 7th century B.C.E., about people who never existed, or who, if they did exist, never did or said the things they are said to have done or said.

I say "*all* this remembering" because much of the Bible obviously is false memory. It is not reasonable to assume that a boy named David slew a giant named Goliath, especially because, as biblical critics have pointed out, the same slaying is attributed elsewhere in the book of Samuel to a different hero and apparently belongs to a legend that settled on David in the course of time. The Bible has many

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such legends. But the story of David and Bathsheba need not be a legend. It may not have happened—but it *could have*.

This is perhaps the only reason, ultimately, why it is of more than just historical interest whether Eilat Mazar has found David's palace. Not that finding it would make David and Bathsheba's story, part of which takes place in a bedroom of this palace, necessarily true; and not that failing to find it would make it necessarily untrue. But just as, in a courtroom trial, each truth told by a witness increases the probability that his next statement will also be true, and each falsehood that his next statement will also be false, so it is with the verses in the book of Samuel: "And David built round about from Millo. . . . And Hiram of Tyre sent messengers to David, and cedar trees, and carpenters, and masons, and they built David a house." Each, if true, makes it more likely that so are other things in the book of Samuel, and in the rest of the Bible.

One can read the Bible as a work of the imagination and still garner wisdom and pleasure from it. But the Bible asks to be read as a book of memory. Those who love it can be as skeptical about it as they wish and still cheer for it every time another reason is found to read it in this way.

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The Merchant of Mombasa
A Novella

Hesh Kestin

In converting Jews to Christians, you raise the price of pork.
—William Shakespeare

BETWEEN THE Hindu crematorium and the infectious-diseases hospital, Sergeants Mess was partially hidden by a stand of coconut palms and a large sign that seemed to have been imported directly from Trafalgar Square:

LOOSE LIPS SINK SHIPS
and will result in
severe disciplinary action.
By order: Braithwaite, CO,
East Africa Command (Kilindini)

Just beneath was a smaller version in Swahili, which I had been cramming since first we got word of J Group's transfer from Bletchley Park, home of His Majesty's Inter-Branch Cipher Command. With the fall of Singapore, the beginning of attacks on Ceylon, and India in line to be the next target of a seemingly unstoppable Japanese onslaught, 150 naval vessels of the Eastern Fleet had left the East to find shelter in and around Mombasa under the command of Vice Admiral Sir Hoddings Lord Braithwaite CBE, one of a raft of aristocrats who had become, by dint of birth and the exigencies of war, senior officers in His Majesty's service.

Lord Braithwaite may have been a bit of a stickler for what we in the Royal Canadian Air Force, from which I was on loan, called EBBU—Every Button Buttoned Up!—but when he had steamed into Kilindini harbor aboard his flagship, HMS *Warspite*, and felt for himself the tremendous wet heat of Mombasa, he did have the good sense to revise previous orders and permit tropical kit: sleeves rolled to a regulation one inch above the elbow, knee-length trousers, calf-height cotton stockings, and an allotment of one pair of dark glasses—or clip-ons for those who already wore spectacles.

The joke in Kilindini was that any spies in the vicinity would hardly have broken a sweat to identify the boffins from Bletchley Park: we were the ones wearing the clip-ons. Aside from a Dutchman named van Oost, who was so athletic he climbed Mt. Kilimanjaro two weeks after we set up in Kenya—I quit a thousand feet from the summit: as in code-breaking, the last steps in mountain climbing are the most difficult—we tended to look precisely what we were. With the exception of our group CO, who was a career officer, our ranking major, who had been something or other in CID, and Bailey, a sergeant like myself who had been in one of those spectral pre-war cipher agencies, most of us were a mixed bag of prematurely balding, ill-at-ease types, quite a few with rather bad skin. It

HESH KESTIN, *a new contributor, was European bureau chief of* Forbes, *publisher of the* Nation *(an English-language Israeli daily), and editor of the* American, *an international weekly. His serial novel,* American Messiah, *is soon to be published on the web at americanmessiahonline.com.*

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was as if the entire teaching staff of an English public school had been redeployed to East Africa. As the single Canadian, I was arguably odd man out, except that—along with Jenny Singleton and Amanda Hobbes, our company clerks—I could hardly claim the privilege.

The sudden appearance of women caused two problems, one immediate: as we clambered down the gangway of AMC *Alaunia*, wolf-whistles, accompanied by certain clearly understood gestures, could be heard from the deck of HMS *Royal Sovereign* docked alongside. Neither Singleton nor Hobbes seemed to know how to react; both were on the plain side, and this may have been the first time they were exposed to the undifferentiated lust of massed males. Perhaps less homely, I had been through it before.

The second problem was housing, which eventually solved the first.

It appeared no one had given the slightest thought to where to billet a collection of mathematicians. Tents were out of the question: although our brains were fit, many of us were past service age or otherwise frail. Our commanding officer, Paymaster Col. Moseley, who knew his way around a regiment, immediately paid a visit to HQ, where it was determined we should put up at a small hotel, the Lotus, and the next week move both our working and sleeping quarters to Allidina Visram School, an Indian boys' academy about a mile up the coast.

There remained the problem of security, both because of the presence of women—aside from a contingent of nurses, East Africa Command was almost entirely male—and because of our work. Though Bletchley Park, where we had undergone training, was sealed tighter than Downing Street, our quarters in Mombasa were wide open. In the end a detachment of the King's African Rifles was dispatched, the result of which was not so much to keep others out as to lock us in. Our days in the duty room were dedicated to monitoring Japanese wireless transmissions in the Indian Ocean, our nights spent mostly in a curry-scented prison where all the beds were three-quarter size and all the bathrooms held rather low-hung urinals, both something of a hazard for the taller men.

This was the least of it. Our duty room was full of flying creatures, from gnats and mosquitoes to a dependency of bats that lived in the rafters and preyed on a *madrassa* of praying mantises, each as long as a hand. For variety, the occasional snake slithered in to escape the heat, and a troupe of aggressive spider monkeys infested the grounds outside. Boredom was endemic. We quickly burned through most of the reading matter in the school library—there is only so much one can do with *The Hardy Boys' Missing Chums* and *Hopalong Cassidy's Rustler Round-Up*. With most of our working hours spent listening through earphones to wireless broadcasts, few of us had much patience for tuning in to the rare bit of music that reached us, weather permitting, from Nairobi. The work was demanding, often exciting when we made a breakthrough, but our leisure hours were no fun at all.

That is why when I received word to report to Vice Admiral Lord Braithwaite's residence the next day for high tea, I was as much delighted as I was terrified: both my uniforms were a sight. Singleton generously lent me her new skirt, and Hobbes did what she could with my hair, which had not been cut for a month and hung about my ears like a shapeless dirty-blonde mop. It simply was not made to stand up to the tropical heat, so heavy with humidity we often found it necessary to change our undies twice a day.

What was this high-tea business about? Neither my immediate superior, Lt. Fahnstock, nor our commanding officer, Col. Moseley, had a clue—or so they pretended.

II

COMPARED WITH our billet at the Indian boys' school, and the functional squalor of Sergeants Mess, to say nothing of the inadequately ventilated room we worked in eleven hours each day—one of our crew, Lammings, who had grown up in East London, likened it to a sweatshop, with mathematicians in lieu of Cockney sewing-machine operators—anything decent for tea would have been a godsend. Lord Braithwaite's official residence was more than decent. It was spectacular, a breathtaking white-marble cross between a stately home and a tea pavilion.

Apparently that is what it had been: the stately home of a principal tea grower, an Indian of some sort who had volunteered its use to His Majesty's Forces. After innumerable entry halls and foyers, each leading into the next like a series of Chinese boxes, I was escorted through a set of double doors that opened to reveal the stage-set drama of a veranda looking out over Kilindini harbor, a table set for three, and two very different gentlemen standing by the alabaster balustrade and conversing so closely they might have been hatching a plot.

The adjutant who had taken me this far, quite dashing in that vacant way of the British landed gentry, turned silently on his heel just as we passed

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through the carved teak doors, and disappeared.

Lord Braithwaite was a massive figure in khaki whose gray mustache covered a good quarter of his pink face. The other gentleman seemed by comparison even frailer than he actually was. Balding, and wearing the kind of pince-nez that university dons liked to affect so that they might stare over them and dress you down for some horrid academic fault, he was attired in seriously out-of-date civilian clothes, including a cravat, something rarely seen in the steam room that was Mombasa. As though a bell had rung, both looked up abruptly.

"And you are, eh, sergeant, is it?"

I snapped a salute, and held it. "Ferrin, sir. Sergeant, Royal Canadian Air Force, late of Bletchley Park, seconded to His Majesty's Navy, Kilindini. Sir!"

"Very good, Ferkin," Braithwaite said, smiling graciously under the broad whiskers that plumed out over his yellow, rather crooked teeth. He returned my sharp salute with something like a wave; he seemed almost to be scratching his head. Behind him the sun descended toward the horizon and mainland Kenya—the residence was situated on a spit of land jutting west into the harbor like a thumb surrounded on three sides by water. In the gardens sloping to the sea, its bright blue-green now tinged with gold, Royal Marine sentries in full dress paced like clock-work figurines. On either side, guard towers framed the view. "Needn't be so all-fired military, must we? Come and have a drink, sergeant. And do say hello to Mr. Albright. What are you these days, Cyril? Political adviser, what? Africa walla, that kind of thing."

"Political adviser, sir, if you wish," Albright said. Next to Braithwaite's energetic beefiness, he looked the very image of academic inutility, his suit, drab brown or olive or gray, hanging on him like a shroud. "So nice to meet you, sergeant. Canadian, you say." It was not a question. "Good people, the Canadians. The Frenchies among you can be a bit difficult, though. You're not . . . ?"

"No, sir," I said. "From Alberta, really. Very few French there."

"I'm told you're something of an *mswahili*, is that true, sergeant?"

"Trying to learn it, sir. Out of a book. I've been practicing on the streets."

"*Siku hiyo alikuja afisa mmoja Mzungu.*"

"I'm sorry, Mr. Albright. I don't—"

"On that day a European officer came."

"I meant to say—I did more or less understand the phrase—wouldn't it be *sajini*, sir? I'm not an officer."

"Do they drink champagne at high tea in Alberta, Ferkin?" the vice admiral asked. He held out a flute already filled—I don't think I had seen a glass so delicate in my life. "Do relax, sergeant. Come and have a drink, a bit of smoked salmon. You do eat smoked salmon, don't you?"—he did not wait for a reply—"or there's some of this goose-liver paste. With the Jerries in France, a bit hard to come by these days."

"*Unakula nyama ya nguruwe*?" Albright said.

"No, sir." I said. "I don't eat pork. But goose is fine." Fine? After the unidentifiable meat of Sergeants Mess, it was paradise.

"That you are, in fact, of a certain persuasion—*Myahudi*?"

"I am, sir. But I don't quite understand—"

"The vice admiral thought you might not be comfortable with victuals that would place you in a sticky spot."

"What do your *people* do?" Braithwaite said. "If you don't mind my asking, Ferkin."

Now I was thoroughly confused. Was he talking of my people, or my people? Never mind. I was to answer. "My father is a rancher, sir. Mum teaches. Mathematics, sir."

"Brothers, sisters?"

"No sisters, sir. One brother. RCAF. Missing over Burma, sir."

"Very sorry to hear," Braithwaite said, clearly not. "Know something of horses, do you?"

"I'm sorry, sir?"

"Horses," Albright jumped in, seeking to clarify by translating into a language I barely understood. "You know, *farasi*."

"I grew up on a horse." Consciously I omitted the sir. Instead I turned to the vice admiral, himself turned away to peer out over the bay. The lights of Mombasa were just coming on—how different from England, where under threat of German air raids the night brought only darkness, and fear. "Vice Admiral Braithwaite, sir," I said to his back. "I'm a bit confused. I'm RCAF on loan to His Majesty's Navy for the purpose of assisting in code-breaking operations under supervision of Bletchley Park. I am a mathematician. I have no idea what my religion and, and . . . horses, have to do with my work. Should I be offended, sir?"

That was the closest I could get to a complaint. There were two other Jews in our group—why was I being singled out? Was it because I was Canadian? That made no sense. And the horse business . . . I watched Braithwaite turn slowly to face me, his lips pursed beneath his mustache as though in consideration of some great question of naval strategy

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upon whose outcome hung the fate of the empire.

"Sergeant, I am promoting you as of this minute to flight lieutenant. As such you are hereby attached directly to my staff. You will be my principal adviser on matters equine and Judaic. As of tomorrow morning, I want you to begin work on securing for myself a number of horses."

"I'm a code-breaker, sir."

"Code-breaker, horse-breaker, all the same, what. As I say, you will help me to secure at least two horses. If possible, seven."

I could not stop myself. "Jewish horses, sir?"

Albright looked down at me over his pince-nez and tapped the champagne flute in his hand as though it were a school bell. "Not Jewish horses, Ferrin," he said with a mixture of kindness and exasperation. "Horses from a Jew."

This left me no more enlightened. "Sir, I'm afraid I—"

"Afraid?" Braithwaite snorted, at once avuncular and all-powerful, as though he had adopted an orphan whom he would protect, but only so long as she behaved. "I don't know about you, Ferkin, but I do get a bit peckish at this hour, and would so like to eat. Mr. Albright hardly ever appears hungry, not unexpected from a vegetarian—I believe they teach them that at Oxford, from which he's come to educate me on the native scene—but I'll wager *you* could do with a change from Sergeants Mess."

"Yes, sir. I think so, sir."

"So there's nothing to be of afraid of, really, is there? Now, come and sit, and we'll tell you all about it." He smiled more deeply as I stepped toward the table set with silver and china and Irish linen, all marked with the admiral's crest. "Jewish horses. Very good, wouldn't you say, Cyril? Imagine the circumcision. Jewish horses, indeed."

III

THE OWNER of said Jewish horses, and of much of Mombasa, was one A.S. Talal, also proprietor of Talal General Stores, the Selfridges of Kenya, with large branches here and in Nairobi and smaller outlets in Kisumu and Nakura, and of Talal Transport, the principal bus company—one traveled to Nairobi by rail, but TT was the virtual monopoly within the main towns—and Talal Brewers, producers of Green Tiger Lager, Black Circle Stout, and a line of non-alcoholic beverages, including, under license from Schweppes, bottled waters, fruit juices, and an intensely sweet potion called Ken-Kola that was popular with His Majesty's Forces because it could be readily fermented. Startled newcomers to Mombasa often took cover from the sound of Ken-Kola bottles exploding in the night.

Talal was clearly profiting from the military invasion. Officers smoked his Kilimanjaro-brand cigarettes—packaged to look like Players—while other ranks tended to roll their own from the locally grown Royal Virginia Estates Blend, also Talal's. When uniforms wore out—women's excepted: I had mine made up by a local dressmaker—as they did with amazing rapidity in the moist climate, off-the-peg replacements were available from cloth woven by Talal Mills and sewn by Talal Tailors Ltd. The ferries that moved in the harbor were Talal's, the plantations of coconut in the lowlands and, of conspicuous value, tea in the highlands were Talal's, and—I was given to understand—the same individual had at one time played a significant role in the business of betting, which was the non-whites' chief hobby, followed closely by adultery and alcohol. (Among the European residents the order of preference was said to be reversed.)

If I had thought this louche background made A.S. Talal seem vaguely romantic, like an American gangster who had, as they said in Edward G. Robinson movies, gone legit, I could not have been farther off-base. Like most successful Indians in Africa, A.S. Talal was hard-headed and narrowly focused. He may also have been the most off-putting man I had ever met.

This was not because he had mangled features or missing limbs. For an Indian, his skin was lighter than most, his features almost European—though his nose was quite large and as hooked as any in a Nazi propaganda poster—and his manner of dress and personal hygiene more than acceptable. It was his ego, which could have swallowed up Lord Braithwaite's and Cyril Albright's together. What I found repellent was not his appearance but his attitude.

"A flight lieutenant?" he said to me on first sight, pronouncing it the way the Brits did, *left-tenant*. "I should have thought wing commander at least. Young lady, would you mind terribly going back to your superiors and coming back a colonel, or a general? We've got four generals in Mombasa these days. Surely Braithwaite can spare just one?"

I wasn't sure how to take this, or if the taut glare on his smooth, unlined face was its natural condition. "I'm sure that can be arranged, Mr. Talal," I said, with the intention of not backing off. "But you wouldn't want the admiral to raise someone in rank merely to impress you. I had heard you were shrewder than that."

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Now he looked at me in a different way. His jaw relaxed a bit, and behind his thick frameless lenses that were darkened into some sort of deep rose I could just make out a light, a glint perhaps.

"What is your mission, flight lieutenant?"

"It was explained to me as liaison, sir."

"You can drop the sir, young lady."

"You may drop the young lady, sir."

He smiled. "And if I drop her, will she break?"

We were in his office, a room about three times the size of the duty room at Allidina Visram School, and rather more tidy. For one thing, no flies—or bats. Talal's desk was a large Indo-Biedermeier affair of what appeared to be ebony, rather intricately and deeply carved on the legs—it might have started out in life as a dining table—with brass repoussé on the surface protected by glass. From my angle in the single chair opposite, purposely designed to be somewhat lower than his, the relief appeared to be a tableau of ganeshas, the elephant-headed gods of success, figures as complex and detailed as those in the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel. But in the Vatican one looked up, in order to feel the grandeur of the heavenly host and the insignificance of man. Here Talal looked down, the gods encased in glass at his fingertips.

"I am hardly that fragile, Mr. Talal."

"I expect not, if Braithwaite sent you."

A long moment ensued. Talal's large table before me, I decided to lay my cards, such as they were, upon it. "The vice admiral has heard you are in possession of something he desires."

"Mombasa?"

"The vice admiral already has that."

"Only superficially," Talal said. "It's a tricky place."

"Mombasa is under military rule, sir."

"My dear, for a thousand years Mombasa has been under military rule—of the Galla, the Zimba, the Swahili, the Omani many times, the Dutch, the Turks, the Portuguese any number of times, the Swahili yet again, and now the British. But Mombasa does not succumb. To govern here is one thing, to rule another."

"Nevertheless, Mr. Talal—"

"Would you like to see my stables now, flight lieutenant, or would you prefer to discuss these matters in the abstract?"

He must have seen the surprise I quickly covered with a smile. How did he know? "If you wish, sir."

"Please do call me Abraham."

It would be a week before I could bring myself to that. "I would be honored to see what it would please you to show, Mr. Talal."

He snorted, then carefully removed his glasses and, with a handkerchief so white it glowed, slowly and methodically cleaned the lenses. His eyes were large, and of a shade that made the brilliant azure of the harbor seem muddled and gray. I had never seen an Indian with blue eyes before, and must have stared. He replaced the spectacles and stood.

"Ferrin," he said. "Ferrin. What sort of name is that?"

"Canadian, sir."

"Come now, flight lieutenant. There is no such thing as a Canadian name. Beyond the poor Eskimos and Aleuts, Red Indians and so on, all Canadians are immigrants. What sort of Canadian are you?"

"My family emigrated from Russia before the turn of the century."

"Orthodox, then? Where the priests marry? Long beards? Those big black hats?" He was toying with me.

"Jewish Canadian," I said.

He raised his head, as though to look at me from another angle. "Ahhhh. . . ." He stretched out the sound until it seemed to be less a recognition than a sigh. "Send a Jew to deal with a Jew. Very clever man, your Braithwaite. But hardly subtle. Not subtle at all."

As I accompanied Talal, who was a bit shorter than I—his trunk was somewhat too long for his legs—out of the office and down steps leading to grounds as manicured as my nails had been in another life, I realized finally that what was so off-putting about the man was also, to me at least, so attractive. He was smarter than those around him, knew it, and wanted you to know it, too, not so much to impress but to get this awkward bit of business out of the way. On the gravel path to his stables I discovered I didn't care. Smart was what I liked. It had always been what I liked. If that had to be wrapped in ego, it was a small price. I found I rather liked Abraham Talal.

IV

After moving up so abruptly in rank I was no longer permitted to continue dining at Sergeants Mess, and missed it. No merit had attended my promotion to the dining room of the Imperial Hotel: I didn't belong.

The unease was general, but only at first. My former superior, Charlie Fahnstock, a rather stout and dour fellow who had grown up in Kenya before studying statistics at the London School of

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Economics—to His Majesty's Forces, statistics was close enough to mathematics— introduced me into my new setting. Like most of the Bletchley Park crew, I was protective of Charlie: he was hardly, as the code-breakers liked to rhyme, a deft-tenant, and probably should not have been in the armed forces at all; he had no leadership abilities whatsoever. But he did speak Swahili—and he meant well.

"G-gentlemen," he said with the stammer that young men of good family affected in those days, "Th-this is Ferrin. Newly c-c-atapulted from the sergeantry to the off-off-officerial c-class. Unlike y-yours truly, c-clearly a case of m-m-merit." Exhausted by his expedition into public speaking, he fell upon his seafood bisque as though he had not eaten for days.

After this, the others were quite welcoming. The prospect of sex might have had something to do with it: officers were discouraged from social intercourse with other ranks, and unlike in Nairobi there were few unattached European women on the coast. After a few minutes it was quite as though I had been an officer forever.

Certainly the African servants could not have known otherwise: our waiter trotted off to the kitchen for a replacement when he noticed I did not touch my soup. Though as a Jewish family in Alberta we had not been particularly rigid regarding the dietary laws, neither shellfish nor pork had ever appeared in our kitchen, and the very idea of eating them turned my stomach.

"Don't fancy the bisque, Ferrin?" The speaker was a terribly good-looking young squadron leader named Trent-Smith—he could not have been more than twenty-two.

"Allergic to shellfish, I'm afraid," I said, smiling.

"Damn shame," he said. "It's not the best thing about the local fodder, it's the only good thing. I haven't had a good chop in months."

Had he been compelled to eat at Sergeants Mess, poor Trent-Smith might have felt better. I was not so blasé. Officers Mess at Kilindini was at the level of the prewar Savoy in London—I had dined there with my visiting parents when I was at Cambridge—or the Ritz-Carlton in Montreal, where my dear lost brother had once treated me to an expensive spread. One could get used to Officers Mess: real butter on the table, salad so crisp it crackled, starched linen, servants so well-trained one hardly finished one's plate before it was smoothly replaced with the next, and somehow or other no flies. Probably they were all at Sergeants Mess.

AT THE EVENING meal, just as I was seated, the brisk adjutant, who had shown me to the veranda only days before and abruptly vanished, now reappeared. "Vice Admiral Lord Braithwaite requests your presence at table," he said. "Lieutenant."

Every eye in the vast hall was upon me as I followed him, threading my way through the sea of ensigns and lieutenants, a lake of captains and majors, a puddle of colonels and commanders, and a sprinkling of brigadiers and rear admirals until, by windows overlooking the harbor—Braithwaite seemed to prefer a clear avenue of escape— I found myself at a table once again set for three. I saluted.

"Do sit, Ferkin," Braithwaite said. He had an enormous prawn in his right hand, with which he tossed off what passed for a salute. "Improvement on Sergeants Mess, what?"

"Yes, your lordship."

He continued to work on the prawn.

"*Shikamoo*, Mr. Albright." It was the way one greeted an elder—I had just learned this refinement. "Always good to see you."

Unlike the vice admiral's, his plate was untouched: on one side three slices of tomato, on the other a bed of lettuce. I had the feeling Albright rarely ate, like some reptile who waited patiently in ambush to swallow something bigger than himself. "*Marahaba*," he said, speaking as an elder. "*Hupendi samakigamba*? It is my understanding you don't care for shellfish," he said. "We share that."

"At least Albright has a decent reason, Ferkin."

"Allergic, actually," the civilian said. "Animal protein. It makes me ill."

I nearly laughed: so my excuse actually made sense in the real world.

"You know, Ferkin," the vice admiral grunted cheerily, wiping his gray mustache with a linen napkin bearing his crest, "Your religion has got you people into quite a mess, hasn't it?"

"My religion, sir?"

"*Chinjo la wayahudi*."

"I don't know the first word, Mr. Albright."

"Massacre, *chinjo*. Plural, *machinjo*."

"Bloody foolishness, holding onto these rituals. Cuts you off from the mass of men. I daresay you people wouldn't be in the state you're in, Nahzees and all that, were it not for the fact you do keep yourselves apart."

"I was at school with a Jewish fellow," Albright said as though mining the past. "Gold something."

An African servant came up just in the nick of time—I don't know where the conversation might

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have led—with a plate of curried chicken, green salad, and, for some reason, a little tent of six leaning gherkins. Clearly the plate had been put together especially for me.

"I've seen the horses, sir," I said brightly, not waiting to be asked, anything to get the vice admiral and his civilian flunky off their talk of crustaceans and Nahzees. Another moment and I might have said something. If Braithwaite wanted to send me back to Sergeants Mess, where no one ever noticed what I ate or did not, or, if they did, had the courtesy not to comment, so much the better.

"You have?"

"Yes, sir. They're splendid."

"Splendid," Braithwaite said, his mustache once again surrounding a prawn. "Or merely unusual?"

I popped a gherkin into my mouth. The remaining five tumbled into a ragged pile on the plate. "Both, sir." I chewed on the gherkin—nothing had tasted so delicious since I'd left home—while Braithwaite gnawed on a fresh prawn with what I supposed was impatience.

Albright broke the silence. "Come, come, lieutenant, there's a war on. We haven't got ages."

"Very well," I said, once again avoiding direct response. Instead I turned physically to the vice admiral. "There are seven, two stallions, the rest mares. There may be more but that is all I saw. They are Marwari, sir. I suppose you know that."

Braithwaite picked up his glass, South African hock, the chilled green bottle shining in a silver ice bucket glistening with rivulets of sweat. He swallowed down a considerable amount. "Yes, Marwari. Tell me what I don't know."

It occurred to me to tell him that he did not know I felt closer to Abraham Talal than ever I could to his lordship, but I dared not. "Just over fifteen hands, the stallions, the mares about fourteen. As you are probably aware, the breed is distinguished for its long pointed ears that taper gracefully and turn in toward each other as if in conversation. Looked at head-on, they form a lyre shape. From the side the head is long and aquiline, straight as this table, sir, with large flaring nostrils and gentle lips."

"Go on."

"They are a beautiful horse, sir. Straight back, strong vertical limbs. Extremely tough hooves. A farrier's nightmare—they run unshod. Mr. Talal was kind enough to explain—"

"Kind enough my left foot," Braithwaite said suddenly, so loudly that officers several tables away looked up. "The man is keen on *selling* his livestock. Kind enough, indeed. He's playing at this damned . . . eastern game. Arabs, Jews, Indians—an infernal bad habit is all it is. Lieutenant, I am more than familiar with the Marwari strain, at least from books. There are, unfortunately, very few of them these days *outside* of books, what with the coming of motor transport and our policy of defanging the maharajas. Before the Great War you might find any odd Indian ruler with a small cavalry, two to five hundred horse, sometimes a thousand. But there are precious few now. Frankly, I think the damned Indians *ate* them. Regardless, our Mr. Talal certainly has the only purebred Marwaris in Africa. For all I know he has the only purebred Marwaris anywhere.

"Now stop looking at me with your mouth open, lieutenant, and help me save the last of this breed and bring them to England where they belong, and can be bred, and will be looked after, and get them out of the hands of your Mr. Talal. Mis-ter Ta-lal, oh yes. You know, for a farthing I would simply seize the lot as military necessity, but those fops in the War Office would have my head, and Whitehall would be upset—present company accepted, Cyril—and there'd be hell to pay. Now go and buy me these ponies, like a good chap, Ferkin, and don't come back without them." He considered. "Splendid, eh? They're not splendid, lieutenant, they're priceless. Now go and get me a price."

V

Were Abraham Talal's horses for sale? In theory, everything Talal owned was for sale. He was, if nothing else, a merchant. But he had not become the principal merchant of Mombasa simply because he bought and sold—everyone on the coast did that, and had for centuries. His secret was the same kind of intelligence we in J Group were in the business of collecting. His methods may have been different, but he clearly spent a great deal of time and money staying informed.

Thus, only a month before the Bletchley Park crew's arrival in Mombasa, Talal had acquired the Lotus Hotel, which was to remain fully occupied by British personnel throughout the war; it was the only second-class hotel on the island with toilet facilities for each room. Whether it was how much to expand production at his cement works at Ndega, or how much to bid on military-construction contracts that would utilize the same cement, he made it his business to know. His dozens of managers—Hindus on the coast, Europeans of one sort or another in the uplands—reported to him regularly with a flood of information.

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Making sense of it must have been a challenge, in perhaps the same way as we code-breakers faced a torrent of Japanese ciphers that remained meaningless without the all-important key. In our situation we were unable to ask further questions; Talal was not so limited. Against the Indian stereotype, he was generous in compensating his staff, who knew they were being spoiled and wished this to continue. Spread throughout the country, they were adept at laying their hands on the right information or the person who could get it. Politically Talal was equally well-connected. It was said he was generous here as well. Certainly he seemed to have a direct line to HQ East Africa Command. Just as certainly, the vice admiral knew it.

This must have been galling to Braithwaite, who could not have been unaware that inviting A.S. Talal for dinner might have gone a long way toward smoothing the path for His Majesty's Forces on the coast. But vice admirals apparently did not deign to sup with merchants, Indian merchants especially, and Jews so much the less. Sending me out to deal with Abraham must therefore have seemed only proper to Lord Braithwaite.

But to Talal the indirect approach was something between annoyance and insult, not least because little that went on in the CO's vicinity remained unknown to him: after all, Braithwaite was ensconced in Talal's primary residence, which His Majesty's forces had more or less commandeered for the duration of the war. Of course the house came with Talal's servants, who must have been a principal conduit of intelligence, though it puzzled me that Talal was aware of matters somewhat too sophisticated for mere Shirazi domestics to pick up. Perhaps some of these servants were cleverer than they let on.

WE WERE riding on the beach at Jumba la Mtwana, having been ferried to the mainland from Talal's private dock in Mombasa, the horses apparently accustomed to this form of transportation. I was on a lovely piebald mare called Rajshree, my host on Mewar, a skewbald stallion with ears as long as my jodhpurs. I had told Abraham I had no riding clothes. That morning a superb set of boots, britches, and jersey, along with a black-velvet-covered helmet, was delivered to my quarters at the school—all my size, even my taste.

Rajshree was easy in the reins, responsive to the slightest signal, and loved to run on the packed sand, small waves spilling over and wetting her unshod hooves in what seemed to be adoration. I had not had such fun on horseback since riding at home on the ranch with David, of whom I had heard nothing since his plane had disappeared four months earlier. I can't say this was not on my mind as Rajshree swept over the sand in a curious gait halfway between a gallop and a canter, so smooth there was almost no vertical motion—Abraham was later to describe this to me as the *ravaal*, a movement unique to Marwaris—and I stuck to the high-canted cavalry saddle as though glued. We dismounted at a grove of coconut palms, where servants were waiting with lunch.

"Abraham, you do live well," I said.

"I consider it compensation."

"Against?"

"Against the moment when I do not."

"I should think you would accept the inevitability."

"Oh, I do," he said. "My Hindu friends see things differently, but for me there is only this life."

"And for your Hindu wife?"

He was washing his hands in a copper bowl that had been set up on a bamboo tripod by the table, stopped quite sharply, then resumed. I had just gone through the same wash-up. A servant handed him a dry cloth. "Your intelligence is as good as mine," he said. "Lieutenant."

"I had to know."

He nodded as he cleaned salt spray from his roseate spectacles with the cloth. "Precisely. What is it you don't know that I can tell you?" He forced a smile. "Joan."

"I didn't mean to embarrass you."

"I am not embarrassed. Merely surprised."

"Surprised?"

"That you would care, one way or the other."

It was time for me to force a smile. "You can't think very highly of me, Abraham, if you think I wouldn't."

"Perhaps I was being hopeful," he said. "Would you like to eat, or are you too angry?"

"Never too angry to eat," I said. "And not really angry at all. Disappointed perhaps."

"Disillusioned?"

"Canadians have no illusions."

"Because they have no dreams?"

"Because we have no past," I said. "We're all fresh, new in the world. So we're perfectly happy with what we've got. Like children with a new toy. Or a new friend."

"I'd like to be your friend, Joan. May I be your friend?"

"If I may have some curry," I said, "I'll give it thought."

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He snapped the fingers of his left hand. A servant brought a silver dish, and from it deftly placed a serving spoon of curried fish, delicately flavored with cardamom and turmeric, on my china plate. Early on I was never served meat in Abraham's presence. Perhaps his intelligence agents had already told him to avoid anything that might contravene my sensitivities, but a diet heavy in fish was—I was to learn—only natural for him: my sensitivities were his as well. He himself never ate pig, never shellfish, and the lamb or beef that showed up for dinner Friday evenings, when I began staying the weekend, was miraculously kosher, sent packed in ice by a Jewish butcher in Nairobi on the overnight train that chugged into Mombasa every morning at eight. The Lunatic Line, they called it, because of the hairpin turns that sent it hurtling down from the highlands. For Abraham Talal it must have been anything but. It allowed him the sanity of a Sabbath meal.

"I do have a wife, Hindu, yes, and three children. Daughters. I will show you photos if you like. Very pretty girls, eight, ten, and twelve years of age. Charming girls. Good students. I expect they will be educated at university in England. Would you recommend Cambridge or Oxford?"

"I was at—"

"Cambridge," he said. "I know."

"What don't you know?"

"Whether Oxford or—"

"Cambridge for the sciences, I think. Are they scientific, your daughters?"

"Rather too early to tell, I'm afraid. Did you enjoy—"

"Cambridge?"

"Science, maths, that sort of thing?"

"Since I was a child," I said. "As I grew older, math specifically. Most girls don't tend that way, or aren't encouraged."

"I shall encourage my girls in that direction, if they wish," he said. "If you wish."

"My parents did, actually. Sent me off to McGill, and then I went up to Cambridge."

"You could be at Cambridge now."

"When the war came I volunteered for the Royal Canadian Air Force."

"You can say RCAF."

"RCAF. My brother had already joined up."

"It must be very difficult for you."

"You needn't say it like that. He's missing is all. Missing flyers come back all the time. He's an outdoorsman, tough as nails, and extremely adaptive. I wouldn't be surprised if he is walking out of Burma as we speak."

Did I really believe this? It was what I told myself every night when my head hit the hard pillow at Allidina Visram School. If anyone could survive that kind of ordeal, it was David. But perhaps I told myself this because I was unsure I could survive my own ordeal if it were otherwise. "He rode a bicycle once from Calgary to Montreal to visit me. Took three months. Twenty-two hundred miles." I was truly embarrassed now. There was no comparing this to bailing out over Burma and walking out alive, if he could walk. It was a foolish thing to say, a foolish, girlish, hero-worshippingly hopeful thing to say. My face flushed.

Abraham reached across the table and took my hands in his. They were surprisingly soft, not like a woman's but like a child's. For a moment I was ill at ease. Mine were large and bony by comparison, the hands of a rancher's daughter. And then, as though in preparation for some fate I could not know but suspected, my hands relaxed in his as he began to speak.

"You will no doubt think badly of me," he said. "And if so, you must have all the facts. Better to know than to guess. Joan, I am a man who has made my choices and . . . I live with them. When I came out to Kenya in '29 I can't say I had nothing, but close. One-hundred-twenty pounds sterling, letters of introduction to persons in the Indian community in Nairobi and in Mombasa. My father had died the year before—"

"I'm sorry."

"That was thirteen years ago," he said gently. "And Father was eighty-one. We're long-lived, the Talals. He was a livestock dealer in Rajasthan, as his father had been, and his. Horses, cattle, sheep, goats. Even chickens sometimes. Never pigs, of course. And camel. Many, many camel. And elephant. In Father's time Rajasthan, the Rajput states then, was more or less cut off from the world. The maharajas retained their independence from the central government, an independence that would diminish over the years as the British, in their clever way, bought off the nobility.

"Our specialty was the Marwari. We supplied the cavalry mounts for all of Rajasthan and the Northern Frontier, a desert country but a good business. When my father was a young man the Maharaja of Jhaipur kept three-thousand men under arms, most on horseback. These were the same cavalry, the same type of men, the same type of horse, that had turned back the Moghul invaders, man and horse leaving the field only victorious or dead. Our stud held hundreds of mares,

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dozens of stallions of the best type. Black and white, brown and white, silver, chestnut. All well-conformed to the Marwari standard, long ears meeting in an arch, aquiline nose, the large nostrils, the same body type you see here, thin coats like silk, big eyes, straight legs, unslanted shoulders, hooves like steel. You are seeing them now, but I am told today that in India there are few pure Marwari left.

"Joan, when this war is over the British will find themselves with mountains of tanks, continents of warships, fields upon fields of decommissioned warplanes. They will be sold for scrap. No one needs armament when there is no war. So it was with the Marwari. The maharajas did not require horses beyond a few for ceremonies, and the British cavalry preferred larger animals, less hot-blooded, hunter-jumpers, fox-hunt horses, not racing horses, not war horses. They brought over Walers from Australia, capable of carrying heavier loads. Our Indian horsemen are lighter, and were lightly equipped. The Marwari are fast, meant for the desert—notice their legs are almost perpendicular to the ground, which makes them fast on sand, as you have seen. They can pull them out of soft earth more quickly than—am I boring you?"

I looked at him. "Never."

"It's not often I can talk of this."

"How often?" I asked.

"Never," he said.

"Then don't be shy."

A laugh exploded from his face, and he seemed as young and innocent as the hands that held mine. "I am not shy," he said. "I am . . . unaccustomed. It is not my habit to—what is it you North Americans say? I was a great reader of Jack London as a boy—'spill my gut'?" He seemed to relax now. The servants, ever hovering, had gone to groom the horses they had tethered, unsaddled, in the coconut grove, the only sounds their movement, an occasional whinny, and the gentle surf. "Joan, we had the patent, as you might say, on the Marwari horse. For two hundred years we Talals of Jhaipur sold only mares and geldings. The stallions remained ours. And then, suddenly, the way battleships and fighter planes and submarines will be worthless after this war, our treasure was worthless—there were no more wars. The maharajas having been pacified, their cavalry was merely an expense. The Marwari had become a thing of the past. I selected the best stock, the rest . . ."

"You needn't say it."

"And with them came here." His eyes wandered, as though to a past I could not share. "The Indian community in Kenya is a community of traders, merchants. Perhaps as an Indian and a Jew I may say I was as bred for this as the Marwari were bred for war. The people here welcomed me. They knew my family, my father, his father. Sikh, Jain, Hindu, Muslim, Christian, Jew—whatever it was that caused strife amongst us in India melted away here. There was enough for all. The Africans, even the Shirazi here on the coast who have been traders for a thousand years, were no match. The whites rarely wished to dirty their hands. In time I became . . . what I am."

"And married."

"Perhaps I should have brought a Jewish wife from Calcutta, the custom of my family because we were the only Jews in Jhaipur, in all of Rajasthan. Or sought a Jewish bride from the European community in Nairobi. That way my daughters would be Jews, and I would not be the end of my line, like my horses. But in those days, even more than now, crossing the color barrier was not lightly done, and I did not feel I had to beg for anyone's hand. Soon enough, as young men do, I fell in love." He shrugged. "And that is the story of my life, Joan. Full of quirks, perhaps, but not unusual, not at base." He paused. A wave broke, the wind picked up. "Until now."

VI

THAT NIGHT I attended the weekly concert beneath the walls of Fort Jesus, the Portuguese outpost that had stood here since the 16th century. Attendance was hardly mandatory. The only ones constrained to listen were those within the walls: having kept its enemies out for 400 years, Fort Jesus now kept them in. It had become a brig.

How quaint it must seem now, but during the war, with so little certain—London itself was under almost nightly air attack—it was oddly comforting to sit on blankets on the sandy ground while an augmented phonograph played Tommy Dorsey and Artie Shaw. The heat had broken, a steady breeze came from the dhow harbor, and the ever-present mosquitoes, which the Bletchley Park crew had designated the Kenyan national bird, must finally have succumbed to our home-brewed repellent of three parts diesel fuel, one part each lime juice and coconut oil. Sometimes it worked, sometimes not. The mix was volatile: Jenny and Mandy, our clerks, experimented with adding perfumes, but what started out as lavender might during the course of an evening distill itself into something akin to burning tires, and an innocent sandalwood,

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widely available in the Arab shops—it probably came from Persia as in ancient times, via Oman across the water—became pungently musky, strongly suggestive of the scent that blossoms with exercise, or fear, or intimacy.

Not that we girls needed scent to inspire interest. Hardly beauties, the clerks had the pick of every enlisted man in coastal East Africa, and since being promoted I had found myself in the same kind of high demand among my fellow officers—not so much a compliment as a bother. Now, while the Andrews Sisters swung out "Boogie Woogie Bugle Boy of Company B," another voice broke through. It was a rich baritone, full of that languid timbre cultivated by Englishmen of a certain background.

It was Trent-Smith, the young squadron leader at whose table I had dined the first day in Officers Mess. "Like Patti, Maxene, and LaVerne, do you?" he said, sitting himself down next to me like a fresh wineglass inserted at an already crowded table. He had all but forced his way between myself and a bulky naval captain with a sharply etched David-Nivenesque mustache. "Just for the moment, old stick," he said, not waiting for permission, and turned back to me. "It's queer how we've colonized Africa only to have African music colonize us."

"The Andrews Sisters are white," I said.

"Their music isn't. Don't get me wrong. I do love jazz. But I hear they're drinking an awful lot of Coca-Cola in England these days."

"We Canadians are used to it," I said. "We're the forty-ninth state."

"Rather do like the Yanks," he said. "Individually. Massed, they are a bit much. But we *are* flying their planes, dropping their bombs. Hard to dislike them for it. Not impossible, but hard. Bite the hand and all that."

The Americans had been in the war for three months by now, and even in East Africa we were beginning to feel their presence. Since January we shared our results on the Japanese codes with Washington, and as we cracked one cipher after another it was in everyone's mind that the Americans would be able to do quite a lot more than the Royal Navy with the fruits of our labor. For one thing, they had submarines, and were building more every day. My work on J8, the secondary code of the Japanese commercial fleet, especially the tankers, was coming along, but I felt I should be doing more; the other significant ciphers, J2, J3, and J6, had already been broken. But code-breaking is as much a function of time as anything else, and since my elevation to the officer corps I was frequently called away on liaison duties, a good deal of which, I admit, were of my own making.

If my job was to get close to Abraham Talal, very well then, I would do so. We dined together nightly, toured the Arab shops on Dika Street together, and went on long rides along the coast. On today's trek we had gone inland to visit the site of an abandoned city where, as if by pre-arrangement, Abraham was able to sift in the ruins and come up with a shard of porcelain. "Ming," he said. "These people were first-class merchants. You'll find Persian bits as well, and if we search long enough, Venetian coin. Hard to believe, but at one time this was a center of commerce." Whatever had compelled the inhabitants to flee—raids by Galla horsemen from the north, by Zimba cannibals from the inland forests, possibly a final attack by the Portuguese, perhaps lack of water—whatever the cause, there was now a finality about the place that was, even in the hot wet, chilling. Mombasa itself had been three times destroyed and three times rebuilt. Here the inhabitants had decamped never to return, leaving behind their pots, sticks of furniture, cloth, even pets: while our horses grazed nearby, Abraham casually pointed out the brittle skeleton of what could only have been a dog.

"Nothing lasts, does it?" he said. It was not a question but a statement of fact.

I chose to hear it differently. "It can. Rather depends on will. Look at Mombasa."

"Yes," Abraham said, removing his roseate lenses so that I could see his eyes, somewhat bloodshot from the dust of the inland ride. "But Mombasa is only Mombasa. It's never been Rome or London or New York. It's lasted because no one ever demanded much of it. Nothing was ever created here. It's just trade. A lot of it, but just trade."

"*Are you there, Ferrin?*" It was Trent-Smith. "You seem miles away."

"Just caught up in the music," I lied.

He leaned close. "Do you think we could meet after the concert? I know a place."

For an Englishman, Trent-Smith was refreshingly direct. Perhaps it was the war, or the American influence, or maybe he had simply discovered that it worked. "I'm afraid my heart is . . . otherwise engaged," I said.

He smiled broadly, a young man's confidence radiating out like the sun's last beams through the purple clouds behind the fort. "Ferrin, I hope you won't be offended," he whispered. "But, as they say in Soho, I wasn't aspiring that high."

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VII

I MIGHT HAVE slapped him; perhaps I should have. But the secret was out. It was difficult keeping secrets in Mombasa. The Bletchley Park contingent knew that I did not normally return to Allidina Visram School until just before dawn, when Abraham's Shirazi driver would take me back through the narrow streets below the balconied houses and along the deserted ring road, then past the dozing sentries of the King's African Rifles. Weekends I was hardly ever around, and though I took care to show up at the weekly concert or the odd birthday party, the school was merely where I worked, however sleepily. There were probably jokes—"liaison" had two meanings, after all—and I suffered the occasional wink, but mostly it was all fetid inference: Trent-Smith was hardly the only one to proposition me, merely the boldest. A European woman who slept with an Indian was fair game. Abraham must have known, of course, as he knew everything.

"I don't think the vice admiral is happy," he said one Friday evening at dinner. "One would think he has better things to think about than my horses."

"You shouldn't judge him," I said. "He's just a man."

"Perhaps, but a powerful one. You know what the Shirazi say: there is no such thing as a small enemy. How much more so when it is a large one. He seems compelled to covet what is mine."

"He thinks you an inadequate guardian of the Marwari."

"I am their only guardian, Joan. He will merely wish to display them at horse shows, like circus beasts. You know, I was never a nationalist, but it is possible to understand a Mohandas Gandhi. The British are an inferior race who have seized power and abuse it, endlessly and without shame. I am so glad they will be brought down after this war."

"Brought down? You mean if the Axis—"

"If the Axis win or the Allies. Having saved the English from the Germans, the Americans will not let them have back what they once stole. These are vast markets. The Americans will want them. Once geared up for war, they will need to produce for peace. I am not a vengeful man, but if Perfidious Albion were to take a bashing I would not shed a tear."

He had just made the traditional blessing on the wine, chanting the brief prayer in an unusual singsong that would have puzzled my parents, for it reflected a Jewish tradition that was alien to them. Salting two pieces torn from a yellow loaf heady with turmeric, he passed the plate to me. As we chewed, only the two of us at one end of his long dining table on the terrace overlooking the old town and the dhows in the harbor shining like triangles of light, he brought up what we had been avoiding since the day we had met.

"Joan darling . . ."

The servants came in, bearing trays of food: vegetable samosas, *nyama choma* of lamb on a bed of pilau, and boiled collard greens, *sukuma wiki*. It was hard to know what his Shirazis thought of this, for on the rare occasions when Abraham's wife came out with the girls, they served her as well. Discrete they were, of course, but bribable. Everyone in Africa was bribable. And not stupid: just as Abraham knew everything that went on in his universe, it was inconceivable that Mrs. Talal did not know what went on in hers. Hindu or Muslim, Christian or Jew, no woman could bear to know that her husband had taken another. Nor could I bear to be that other. The servants withdrew. It would be easier for us both if I spoke first. "It's not a good situation, is it?"

"We're about to spoil a Sabbath meal, aren't we?"

"I told you, I'm never too angry to eat."

"Too hurt, then?"

"I'm a rancher's daughter. I don't hurt easily. And you needn't worry. I make it a point not to cry."

"Will you mind if I do?"

Despite myself I let go a hard look. I'd wanted more self-control than that. "I'd be surprised if you did, Abraham, whether about the decline of Albion or the decline of us. We've had our fun. Let's leave it at that."

At this his face drained of color, then as suddenly flushed. "That is unnecessary and untrue, Joan. If I could I would divorce, you know that."

"You mean, if you could without repercussions."

"My wife is a good woman. She does not deserve to be abandoned. The children do not need the shame."

"Nor do I, Abraham," I said.

"You deserve better than this, my Joan."

"I deserve nothing more than a lift home," I said. "Will you summon your driver, or shall I call a cab?"

VIII

TWO WEEKS later I broke J8. Maybe I could have done it earlier and, theoretically at least, caused the war to end that much sooner. Maybe not. All I know is that I was again working hard and long and with renewed intensity; perhaps I got

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lucky. There was also much to be learned from the others' progress, so that when the eureka moment arrived I hardly felt triumph but merely relief. Somewhere in the Indian Ocean or in the Pacific, an American submarine or warplane would soon be bearing down on a Japanese tanker or a freighter carrying ammunition or food for the imperial troops in their island fortresses, or perhaps the very troops themselves. My work would have been part of that, as much so as if I'd pressed the button that released the torpedo or dropped the bomb. I often dreamed of it, colorful melodramatic dreams in which the horror my work had unleashed lived alongside, thrived alongside, the self-satisfaction of success.

"Good show on the ciphers, Ferrin!"

Vice Admiral Lord Braithwaite had finally gotten my name straight. He was grinning, the full ruin of his English dentistry leaping out at me. I thought he might clap my back. "You're being mentioned in dispatches, are you aware?"

"Col. Moseley was good enough to let me know. My job, sir."

"Nonsense. You boffins have turned out a delightful surprise. It's hardly a secret I didn't think any of this would amount to a hill of—Cyril?"

"*Maharagwe*," Albright said.

"*Maharagwe*, beans, *maharagwe*," Braithwaite said, as if he were a boy at school. "Mr. Albright is teaching me useful Swahili, Ferrin. After the war I may come back here, buy a farm. Don't like the coast much. Entirely too hot. But in the highlands, tea, a few cows, *maharagwe*, that sort of thing. India's done. People won't work. Politicized."

"I'm told, Lord Braithwaite, that the British presence in Kenya may be somewhat reduced after the war." I have no idea why I said that. It was as if I were intent on bringing Abraham into the conversation, as though I had absorbed part of him in me—and was now compelled to get him out. "Nationalism, sir."

"Nonsense, Ferrin. The Union Jack will never be struck in East Africa. It may not be fashionable to say so, but your native Kenyan is no. . . ." He looked again to Albright.

"*Mzungu*."

"Yes, of course. I know that one. *Mzungu*, *wazungu*. Without us *wazungu* they'll come a cropper, and they know it." His tone now changed. "Tell me about my horses, Ferrin."

For some reason, what I was about to say gave me a peculiar kind of physical pleasure, the kind that might be difficult to describe in mixed company. I had been rehearsing my response for days now. I delivered the verdict slowly, spacing out the words. "Your horses, sir, belong to Mr. Talal."

"I know that."

"And he is not giving them up."

"Of course he is, Ferrin. It's just price."

"I don't think so, sir."

"Price, price, price."

"No, your lordship," I said. "No. No. No."

"Don't be cheeky with me, lieutenant. What's a fair price? I don't need them all. One stallion, one mare. It's not the world, is it?"

"You don't have the money, sir."

"I have as much as I require."

"Lord Braithwaite, whatever your offer, it will be refused," I said. "Mr. Talal does not wish to sell to you, or to anyone else. That is conclusive. Consequently, if it pleases your lordship, I should like to request reassignment."

"It doesn't. You may not."

"Sir, I—"

"I don't care what you request, Ferrin. This isn't the bloody RCAF. You'll stand your watch until relieved."

"Sir, I am *mjamzito*."

"What?"

"*Mjamzito*," I repeated. "Your lordship."

"What is that? Cyril, what is this girl saying?"

A vacuum opened up in the room, a balloon of silence that grew and grew until finally Albright popped it, as though with a pin. But it was not a pin. It was his tone. "Vice admiral, the lieutenant is saying . . ."

In whatever language, the phrase had almost certainly never been spoken by a lieutenant to a flag officer of the Royal Navy, and certainly not in Swahili. It took a moment, a long one. Braithwaite looked from Albright to me, then back to Albright, then back to me. Beneath his luxuriant mustache, the vice admiral pursed his thin lips, then walked resolutely behind his desk and, heavily, sat. Finally he spoke. "Extraordinary."

"Not really, sir," I said.

"How?"

"The usual way, sir."

"I mean to say, Lieutenant Ferrin, by whom?"

"Your lordship, I'd rather not say."

"One of my officers? I must know."

"No, sir. Not one of your officers."

Braithwaite's eyes now widened in horror. "*Not* an officer? Other ranks?"

"I'd rather not say, sir."

"You'll bloody well say if I order you to, Ferrin. I order you to. What is the name of this man? Are

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you aware that intimate relations with other ranks is contrary to—" He stopped. "It isn't other ranks, is it?"

"No, sir."

"Oh my God," Braithwaite said. "Albright?"

"*Gombezeka*, sir."

"Speak English!"

"Reprehensible, sir."

"I know that, Cyril. Of course it is. The question is, what must be done about it?"

"It is a military affair, sir," Albright said.

"It is a military-civilian affair, Cyril. And I do believe that is the right word—affair. Is it not, Ferrin?"

"It's over, sir."

"Jolly good," Braithwaite said. "Of course it's over. You're over, Ferrin. I shall have you out of here when your tour is done. I'm ashamed of having you on my staff. Even were I Canadian I would be ashamed. When *is* your tour done?"

"In six months' time, sir."

"Time enough for court martial."

"On what charges, sir?" I asked. For some reason I was no longer afraid. What could Vice Admiral Sir Hoddings Lord Braithwaite CBE do to me that Abraham had not?

"I don't care what charges, lieutenant. There *will* be charges. Fraternizing with the enemy, for one thing."

"Mr. Talal is not the enemy, sir." I don't know where I got the nerve. "He is a British subject."

"Fraternizing with a British subject then. Fraternizing with someone. Dereliction of duty. Refusing to obey an order. Absence from post without leave. Don't you worry, Ferrin. Charges there will be if I have personally to rewrite the Admiralty Code."

"Begging your lordship's pardon," Albright said in his quiet way. "You were quite right, sir. There are certain delicate civilian aspects to this matter."

"Go on."

"Firstly, we have the question of timing. There are specific, ah, biological manifestations—"

"I'll be showing, sir."

"Indeed, your lordship. So it might be best, to avoid embarrassment all around, for Lieutenant Ferrin to return to the RCAF for reassignment. Her work here is, I understand, done." Albright looked at me oddly, his face almost softening. Later I would understand. "Work done rather well, by all accounts, wouldn't you agree, sir?"

"I am no longer concerned with ciphers," Braithwaite said. Then, in another tone: "What am I not understanding here? You said *firstly*."

"This is a conservative society, your lordship. It's bad enough when we have white members of the military engaging in *ubusinano wa ngono* . . . sexual relations, as it were—"

"As it were?" Braithwaite exploded. "Cyril, the girl is pregnant!"

"Yes, of course, sir. But when it is a European woman and a non-white person, a *Muhindi*—"

"Would that not be *Seti*, in this case, Mr. Albright?" I said.

Albright reflected. "Yes, of course, lieutenant. *Seti* indeed." He beamed as though I were his student and had caught him out. As if I were his success.

The vice admiral clearly had had enough. "What are you people going on about?"

"*Muhindi*, sir," I said. "It's broadly Indian, Hindu to be precise, though Mr. Talal is not in fact a—"

"Talal be damned," Braithwaite said. "This is not about Talal, or his infernal horses. It is, it is—what is it about, Cyril? Be so good as to cease your dithering. Come out with it!"

"*Seti* designates a wealthy Indian, sir," Albright said. "Lieutenant Ferrin has put her finger right on it. The Indian community would be extremely upset. A.S. Talal is a pillar of that community, and as I say it is a conservative community. We rather need their cooperation. They would be—"

"*Ubabaifu*," I said.

"Upset, sir."

"How *uba*-whatever?"

"Over the short term, unpleasantly sticky, your lordship. Perhaps worse, over time the political situation—"

"What political situation? Do we have a political situation in Kenya on which I've not been briefed?"

"Not so much in Kenya just at the moment, sir. But the Indian community here maintains strong ties with the sub-continent. As you know, there are currents in India—"

"Cyril, are you telling me that something which happens between two persons in the middle of the night—good lord, I hope it was in the middle of the night—can possibly inspire rebellion in an entire country? That is patently absurd."

ALBRIGHT SEEMED to grow taller. He was, after all, a don. And this was his field. "Vice admiral, stranger things have happened. Just at the moment the Indian community, which supplies us with almost all our requirements for food, lodging, tropical clothing, even beer—a good deal of this in the hands of the very Mr. Talal who—"

"I know who Mr. Talal is, Cyril. I also know I have the power to commandeer all the food and lodging and beer, even beer, we require. Have you

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forgotten I am God here? I'll have him thrown in Fort Jesus before you can say—what is that word for beans?"

"*Maharagwe*, sir."

"*Maharagwe*, then. And I'll have his horses in the bargain."

Albright coughed gently. "No, sir. I don't think that will do anything but upset the Indian community, which does control commerce in Kenya, in East Africa in fact. This is not a situation which calls for main strength. It calls, sir, for tact."

"I am a vice admiral in His Majesty's Navy, Cyril. We are in a war. What will not be sold us I will take."

Albright grew taller still, and instead of approaching Braithwaite's desk stepped backward and away, as though to distance himself not only from the vice admiral but from his thinking. "Your lordship, should you choose to punish Lieutenant Ferrin for what can only be considered a human failure, and I think an understandable one in wartime especially, I shall report to the Foreign Office that you are a bumbler and a brute, and if you should go so far as to place in jeopardy British interests by undermining our already sensitive relations with the Indian community of East Africa by pursuing a punitive policy toward one or more of that community for what I can only think of as personal reasons, I shall resign my post forthwith and go directly to Downing Street, with which I have excellent relations, and—should that fail—to the press. You may govern here, vice admiral, but you do not rule. Those days, sir, are over."

IX

MONTREAL WAS mild that winter, mild for Montreal, but sub-Arctic compared with the coolest nights in Kilindini, even on Abraham's dhow, when he would wrap his jacket around my shoulders as the wind whipped the normally placid waters of the harbor into miniature whitecaps crisp and pale as meringue.

My teaching schedule was light and spread out over four days in the mornings—the head of the Faculty of Mathematics had been my professor as an undergraduate, and was accommodating in the extreme, perhaps also because most of the good male teachers were called up—and I had a Québécoise nanny who came in those days until two, so that even when a student kept me after class I was able to walk from the campus to our flat on Prince Albert Street and still have time for lunch before she left.

I was not the only one of the old Bletchley Park contingent who had moved on. By the time the baby came, my former colleagues had been redistributed, redeployed, scattered. The tide of war had turned. Some were removed back to Bletchley Park as our code-breaking activities were more and more integrated with the Americans'. Some followed the return of the Eastern Fleet to the Indian Ocean and the Pacific, where listening stations were again established in Ceylon and China. I was receiving kind, chatty notes from places I had never been.

Though Amanda Hobbes never wrote, apparently not having forgiven me for my indiscretions on the wrong side of the color line, through Jenny Singleton I learned that Trent-Jones, that beautiful brash boy, had been killed, shot down by a Japanese destroyer in the Indian Ocean; that van Oost, the Dutchman who had climbed Kilimanjaro in the first weeks, had put a bullet through his head for no reason anyone knew; that poor stuttering Charlie Fahnstock had been promoted to major; and that to the surprise of all, Vice Admiral Lord Braithwaite had proved himself a master strategist, outwitting and outgunning the Japanese in the South China Sea. This last I knew. The Canadian papers were calling him "a second Nelson."

Beyond these notes from friends, all franked by the military and rubber-stamped PASSED BY CENSOR, were two civilian envelopes.

The first came when I was still in London, having been transferred back to RCAF headquarters in Lincoln's Inn Fields, where it was decided, in view of my condition, that I should be honorably discharged as a casualty. As such I may have been the only pregnant officer to be awarded the War Medal, Class B—wounded.

"Dearest Joan," it began,

> I would not write and make a bad situation all the more painful but for the fact that I have news that will please you.
>
> According to my contacts, which I view as authoritative, your brother, Group Capt. David Levy Ferrin, RCAF, is currently a prisoner of war, held by the Japanese in a work camp in Thailand, quite near Bangkok. My information is that he is, given the circumstances, in reasonably good health. If your brother is indeed as strong a specimen as you believe, and his walking out of Burma goes quite a long way to vouchsafe this, there is every chance he will survive the war to be reunited eventually with you and with your family.
>
> You may contact him through the Red Cross according to the particulars on the enclosed page. Though the Japanese are not particularly gracious regarding information on the status of

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prisoners, they will allow packages, not least because they are having a devil of a time feeding themselves, to say nothing of their POW's.

I hope you are well, and that you will forgive me for contacting you, but I thought you would like to know. Please do not feel you must respond. I remain,

Your good friend,
Abraham Talal

At once I made up a package—tinned fish, chocolate, tea, soap, toothbrush and toothpowder, razor blades, and—it was close to Passover—a box of matzah, which I found in a shop in the East End, hoping the Japanese might not grab that, either because it was clearly some sort of religious item or because they simply might not recognize it for the bread it was.

The Red Cross itself was not terribly helpful, merely confirming after some time what has been in Abraham's note. But they did provide a channel for me to send parcels every week while I remained in England, and when I returned to Canada. Of course I never heard from David—the Japanese were uncivilized in that regard—and then after several months the Red Cross admitted they had lost track of him altogether. All over Asia the Japanese were in retreat, and they marched their prisoners with them. Many times it was to tear at me that my success in breaking J8 and thus helping to defeat the Japanese may also have contributed to David's death. After the war I learned he had stumbled, sick with malaria and gangrene, on a forced march, and been shot.

THE SECOND letter carried no return address, but like the first bore civilian stamps and a Mombasa postmark. I received it in Montreal, one month before the birth.

My dear Miss Ferrin,

You may remember me. I was political adviser to Vice Admiral Lord Braithwaite during his tenure as CO East Africa Command here in Mombasa, which the military called Kilindini Station and which, as you may know, is all but abandoned, the war having moved on.

As have you.

I understand from a certain source that you are safely back in Canada, and gainfully employed (which is rather more than I can say for myself—I long for the day I am back at Oxford!). Furthermore I understand that you are well along in your pregnancy, and I trust that this too is proceeding well.

I hope you will forgive me therefore for my impertinence in suggesting that should the occasion arise, you may wish to contact a person in Montreal with regard to arranging for a certain ceremony which in Swahili is called *tohara* (alternatively: *jando*). As I doubt you have reason to keep up your study of this language in Canada, I should say the best translation would be *bris*.

As I never married, and thus have no children (I'm so sorry if this may seem a backhanded insult; I mean no harm), I have no direct experience of arranging a circumcision. Certainly I did not arrange my own.

It is just that I feel a certain paternal pleasure in knowing, especially with the news from Europe, that another little Jew will shortly be coming into the world. Or perhaps it is that because my own life has been compromised—to speak baldly, it has been a lie—I would like to think I have been helpful in setting the child on a better path.

Please find on the enclosed sheet the name of a reliable rabbi and the name of the rabbi in London who suggested him.

I hope you will forgive me for not having been honest with you in Mombasa, but I'm afraid my life has been lived in a different time, under different circumstances.

Please then accept my warmest regards for yourself and the child. Mazel tov!

Your friend,
Cyril Albright

P.S. If it is a girl, you may wish to contact the same rabbi. I believe it is the tradition to name a girl child in the synagogue, but I am unaware of how this is done. If your child is indeed a girl, I trust she will be as brave and forthright as her mother, whom I will admire until my dying day.

David Abraham Ferrin was born on an unseasonably warm November afternoon in Montreal, and in accordance with Jewish law was circumcised eight days later by the rabbi suggested by Cyril Albright. My university colleagues assumed the David Ferrin I sometimes mentioned was my husband, dead in the war—society, even the raffish society of Montreal academia, in those days frowned on unwed mothers. I never lied; they inferred. My own mum and dad, changed irrevocably since the death of their only son, tired now and worn, deduced that Abraham was the father's name, and convinced themselves that he too was a casualty of war. I let them all think what they would. I should have liked to name my baby David Cyril. But the Jewish tradition is to name a child for the dead.

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OBSERVATIONS

Friendship Among the Intellectuals

Joseph Epstein

"IT IS PAINFUL to consider," wrote Samuel Johnson about friendship, "that there is no human possession of which the duration is less certain."

Too true. Some friendships die on their own, of simple inanition, having been quietly allowed to lapse by the unacknowledged agreement of both parties. Others break down because time has altered old friends, given them different interests, values, points of view. In still others, only one party works at the friendship, while the other belongs to what Truman Capote called (in a letter to the critic Newton Arvin, his ex-lover) "some odd psychological type . . . that only writes when he is written to." And then of course there are the friendships that end when one friend betrays or is felt to betray the other, or fails to come through in a crisis, or finds himself violently disputing the other on matters of profoundest principle.

These days, such principled disagreements tend often to involve ideas, and to be endemic among supposedly educated people and especially among intellectuals. The ideas themselves are as likely as not to involve politics. Even more than differences over religion, political disputes seem to ignite ugly emotions and get things to the yelling stage quickly. That may well be why, in 18th-century clubs and coffeehouses, politics was often prohibited as a subject for discussion.

Ex-Friends is the title of Norman Podhoretz's 1999 memoir about his broken friendships with Lionel and Diana Trilling, Hannah Arendt, Norman Mailer, Lillian Hellman, and other eminences in the intellectual life of their time. In each case, politics was at the heart of the trouble. In each case, Podhoretz sets out the story of the friendship and, in a fairer fashion than I think I would have been capable of, recounts how it fell apart.

Over the four decades that I have known Norman Podhoretz, he has taken positions based on his beliefs that have cost him and his family much unjustified contumely, and at times, I have no doubt, true anguish; at a minimum they cost him a central place in what was once snobbishly considered the American intellectual establishment. He has also commanded great loyalty, which speaks to a true gift for friendship. But he knows only one way to take ideas—dead seriously. He is a polemicist, to the bone and beyond, and his has been a life lived in and through argument. Very near the pure type of the intellectual, he cannot avoid taking positions, and cannot say other than what he thinks; candor is in his nature, and he has in him much more charm than diplomacy.

In the introductory chapter of *Ex-Friends*, Podhoretz writes that friends can disagree about a lot, "but only provided the things they disagree about are not all that important to them." He is in interesting company here. In 1914, with World War I about to begin, Ludwig Wittgenstein wrote to Bertrand Russell:

> I can see perfectly well that your value judgments are just as good as mine and deep-seated in you as mine in me, and I have no right to catechize you. But . . . for that very reason there cannot be any real relation of friendship between us.

Of course, in the hothouse world of the New York intellectuals, few if

JOSEPH EPSTEIN's *story, "No Good Deed," appeared in the June issue. The present essay is adapted from his new book,* Friendship: An Exposé, *to be published this month by Houghton Mifflin.*

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any would be ready to concede that an adversary's "value judgments are just as good as mine," let alone forgo the right to catechize. So when Norman Podhoretz turned away from his radical-Left politics of the late 1950's and early 60's, arguing in print that America was on balance a good place in which one was fortunate to be living, the walls crashed down around him. He was looked upon by his former friends, he writes, "as a dangerous heretic, which I certainly was from their point of view"—just as, he adds, "I considered them a threat to everything I held dear, which *they* certainly were—and still are." Those friends who did not think him stupidly or evilly wrong considered him insane. "No wonder," he concludes, "that there is hardly a one of my old friends left among the living with whom I am today so much as on speaking terms, except to exchange the most minor civilities if we happen unavoidably to meet (and often not even that)."

HERE IS the question *Ex-Friends* raises in high relief: for what ideas would one be willing to give up one's friends? Most of us, I suspect, would answer: none. Ideas, after all, are but abstract things and as such are not worth even a single flesh-and-blood friend. And yet, abstract as they are, in the realm of politics ideas have consequences, and those consequences can be measured all too often and all too precisely in flesh and blood.

Communism, which began as an idea, ended up causing death and misery to scores of millions of people for nearly a century. If your friend were to advocate or defend the Communist system, could he truly be your friend? Cicero defined friendship "as nothing other than agreement over all things divine and human along with good will and affection." That is a lot to ask, but it seems undeniable that general agreement on such major matters is a great lubricant for a friction-free friendship.

For me, a person's general point of view is more important than his opinions on specific issues, though I admit that the line between the two is not always easily drawn. I do not see how an African-American, for example, could ever overlook obvious racism in a person he calls a friend. Jean-Paul Sartre and Albert Camus broke up their friendship over Camus's *The Myth of Sisyphus*. The book argued against political utopianism, which Camus thought was the world's most dangerous delusion. Sartre, a utopian who lived comfortably enough with the horrors perpetrated by Joseph Stalin, felt this was going altogether too far, and closed things off. Sigmund Freud, unable to bear deviation from any of his own central ideas, broke with just about everyone in what was once called the Freudian circle.

An interesting sidelight on this point was offered by George Orwell in a letter to the poet Stephen Spender, written just after the two had met for the first time at a party. Until that point, writes Orwell, he had always thought of Spender as the sort of person he despised: a Communist fellow-traveler, an effete poet, an all-around weak type. He had attacked Spender in print on these very grounds. But in person he found Spender to be rather agreeable, and therefore felt disarmed from ever again criticizing him with a clear conscience. Orwell concluded that it was probably a bad idea to attend parties where one might meet enemies and find oneself liking them.

How many intellectual friendships dissolve over conflicts of opinion and ideas cannot be known, but the number is probably at least as great as those that fall apart through such normal perils as insults (intended or not) or wounds resulting from pride, ingratitude, feelings of abandonment, or misunderstanding. Nor are intellectuals immune from the riskiest of all maneuvers in a friendship: the effort to reshape the ideas and even the character of one's friend in one's own image.

A vivid instance of this in my own life was the insistence of my friend Edward Shils on remolding his then-friend Saul Bellow. I first came to know both men in the early 1970's, when they were already on the precipice of breakup. All three of us were unmarried at the time. I met Bellow first, and he introduced me to Shils, who had been responsible for bringing him to the Committee on Social Thought at the University of Chicago. The two men enjoyed a rough parity of prestige, Shils as an international scholar of society and politics and Bellow as a literary artist, though Shils was about four years older and a much more forceful character.

Shils appreciated Bellow's talent, but he wanted him to be somehow grander and graver in his person, and above all more circumspect in his private life—to be a kind of Thomas Mann, with a streak of Jewish jokiness added. Although Bellow was by then in his fifties and already world famous, Shils did not see this as any impediment to reform. A true teacher, he could not help setting people straight.

Samuel Johnson, an unreformable handful of humanity himself, instructs that we must accept our friends as they are—"not as we would make them." Sound advice, which Edward Shils could not quite bring himself to follow. Not that all his efforts went awry. Shils had much to do with converting Bellow politically, making him, a former Trotskyite, less sympathetic than he might otherwise have been to the student revolutionaries of the age and exercising a decisive influence on his 1970 novel, *Mr. Sammler's Planet*.

The friendship must at one time have been very close and precious to both men. By the time I came to know them, however, fissures, cracks, and fallen plaster were already discernible. Bellow took without evident resentment a number

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of sermonettes on what Shils considered the shabbiness of his personal conduct, especially toward women. In phone conversations with me, however, sometimes back-to-back, each would put down the other—brilliantly, I must say. Bellow felt that Shils did not respect him sufficiently; Shils, that Bellow failed to heed his advice and was continuing to behave badly. "I refuse to permit him to use the Committee on Social Thought as a retirement home for his old girlfriends," he once told me.

By the mid-1990's, the two men had pulled so far apart that Shils, who by then lay dying, refused Bellow's request to come bid him a final farewell. After his death, Bellow put him in *Ravelstein* (2000), where he is described by the title character as smelling musty and as probably a homosexual. Neither was remotely the case. But, as the poet Paul Valéry wrote, "No true hatred is possible except toward those one has loved."

I WOULD HAVE liked to remain friends with both Edward Shils and Saul Bellow, but their rising enmity was such that I had to choose between them; slowly, over a year or so, I chose Shils, the larger-hearted and better-natured man. But I myself was never an issue of contention between the two of them, and not for a moment do I think that Bellow, to whom I was never more than a secondary friend, was jealous of my friendship with Shils.

With intellectuals as with anybody else, jealousy is one of the ways that friendship can sadly resemble love. It is not uncommon for two close friends to resent a third person who may seem to be coming between them—or for that third party to resent a close friendship that appears to shut him out, and to seek means of retribution. The novelist Paul Theroux, for example, blamed the breakup of his friendship with V.S. Naipaul on the latter's marriage to a woman regarded by Theroux as aggressive and interfering. Theroux's *Sir Vidia's Shadow* (1998) was the vengeful and vitriolic result—a risible and finally unsuccessful attempt to reduce Naipaul by mocking his pretensions and highlighting his cold-bloodedness.

Theroux may possibly fall into another category—that of the person who, having no real talent for friendship himself, looks to others as ostensible friends in order to be let down by them. "He was inordinately vain and cantankerous," wrote Max Beerbohm about the painter James Whistler. "Enemies, as he had wittily implied, were a necessity to his nature; and he seems to have valued friendship . . . as just the needful foundation for future enmity. Quarreling and picking quarrels, he went his way through life blithely."

Beerbohm discovered a species of friendship made to be broken in the phenomenon that he named *sympat*. He took the word from a Brazilian he had met abroad who, after a few encounters, exclaimed, "Never, my friend, did I yet meet one to whom I had such a *sympat* as you!" Beerbohm used the neologism to refer especially to relationships made while traveling or on holiday, conjuring up, in an essay under that title, the initial pleasure one feels in unfamiliar surroundings upon finding someone with whom one has things in common and with whom one senses a more immediate closeness than might be the case upon meeting the same person at home. "*Sympat*," Beerbohm writes acutely, "is but the prelude to *antipat*." Not that he would have us avoid such friendships when abroad; the trick is to avoid them back home.

With Beerbohm's essay in mind, I recall a time when I might have played a role resembling that of the welcome *sympat* turned dreary *antipat*. This had to do with the novelist Ralph Ellison, who had written an essay for a magazine I then edited. The essay was both beautiful and wise, and when I thanked him for it, he responded by inviting me to lunch when next I was in New York.

We met one wintry day at the Century Club, for a lunch that lasted no fewer than four hours. Everything about the afternoon seemed magical. The flow of talk was unbroken: gossip, friends we had in common, the present state of the literary world. There were jokes, much laughter, and great good feeling on both sides. It was daylight when I walked into the Century Club and dark when I emerged. In Ralph Ellison I had met a man I long admired and found him not in the least disappointing. I felt I had made a new friend.

Returning to Chicago, I wrote Ellison a note of thanks for the meal and the splendid conversation, adding my hope that he would let me know if he planned to be in Chicago so that I could stand him to a similar lunch. He did not answer. A month or so later I wrote again, this time inviting him to write another essay for my magazine. No answer. A few months passed, and I wrote to pass along a bit of news that I thought might interest him. Again nothing. Ellison and I never had another communication of any kind.

Was it me? Apparently not. Soon after Ellison died in 1994, I received a letter from a reader asking if I had known him. This man and his wife had been on a cruise and met the Ellisons, with whom, he thought, they hit it off beautifully. Upon their return, he wrote to Ellison not once but several times, receiving no reply. Did I, he wondered, have any explanation for this strange behavior?

I now think the explanation may lie in Max Beerbohm's notion of the *sympat*, and, what is more, I understand and sympathize with Ellison. A naturally gregarious man, he was someone whom many people, I among them, would have been pleased to think of as a friend. He was also a man who, having published a fine novel, *Invisible Man*, in 1954, had not written another in all the decades since—a man, in other words, haunted by work undone.

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He did not need more friends filling up his days with correspondence, lunches, and the other time-consuming niceties that would follow from his natural sociability. No *sympats* for Ralph, evidently; he eliminated them before they had a chance to turn *antipat*.

I HAVE BROKEN off a few intellectual friendships myself, not all of them justly, and some of them much longer than an afternoon's duration. Once, a friend sent me the manuscript of a book he was writing on Ernest Hemingway. He was a critic very much attuned to Freudianizing his subjects—an interpretative line for which Hemingway, with his super-masculine bravado, was a choice victim. But my friend, I thought, was really pushing the limit, and in replying to one of the chapters he had sent me I wrote that he seemed to be on the path to discovering that Hemingway was a repressed lesbian. He did not find the comment amusing. His response was to write to my wife, suggesting that I was in need of therapy.

That snapped it: we didn't communicate again for fifteen years. But at some point, happily, my ex-friend began writing me brief, cordial notes, which I answered at first in a deliberately distant manner. Then I heard that he was ill, and arranged to meet him for a drink in Washington, D.C., where he lived. I was startled by how his illness had ravaged him, but we easily slipped back into our old friendship; we had both reached the grandfather stage of existence, and had a great deal to talk about. When he died not long afterward, I was left with a sense not so much of guilt as of wistfulness for the good times we might have had together, lost because of a stupid break in our friendship.

Very different was my experience with another friend with whom I had become trapped in a full-blown, decade-long relationship to which there was no way out but cruelly to end it over the telephone. I knew going in that my partner was obsessive and somewhat neurotic, but neurotics can have their own charm: Oscar Levant and George S. Kaufman come to mind. My friend, though, added to his neurosis a strong dose of solipsism, making for an exceptionally strong brew.

In some ways, the basis of our friendship was our shared contempt for those of our fellow intellectuals whom we thought naive or artistically uncultivated. He could talk for great uninterrupted stretches about the awfulness of this or that writer or teacher. (Having published my thoughts on these matters, I did not so much feel the need to talk about them.) The problem was in the word "uninterrupted." My friend was a member in good standing of the club of non-listeners; he could have been its president. Whenever I attempted to break in, to add a point or give the conversation a slight turn, he would mutter "Yeah, yeah," obviously not listening, and resume his tirade.

He wanted to meet once a week over coffee. As time went on, I tried to get out of as many of these meetings as I could: I had heard all of his material, and had grown restive at having my own meager attempts at conversation completely ignored. To be fair, he could be amusing, often even interesting; generous and decent, he was not by any interpretation a bad fellow, or capable of mean acts. He just could not listen.

More and more frequently I made excuses for missing our regular sessions. Sometimes I would deliberately not pick up his calls (thank you, caller ID). But then he would leave messages saying he was worried about me. Was I ill? Was everything all right in my family? He was—is—a kindly man, and I would succumb once again.

To reveal the extent of my social cowardice: it took me nearly two years to muster the courage to tell him that I wanted out. I thought so much about how best to do this that it interfered with my thinking about other things. Finally, I called one afternoon and said that I wished him well but, since he could not seem to bring his non-listening problem under control, I had decided to stop meeting with him. He felt, I sensed, that I was somehow ungrateful for what our friendship had given me—at least he used the word "ungrateful" in response to my awkward kiss-off. But in the end he manfully said, "Farewell, then, Joseph," and hung up. I felt terrible. I also felt hugely relieved.

Every broken friendship can be thought of as a failure or a defeat. Yet, one must ask in each case, was the friendship itself therefore without meaning? Nietzsche, who himself had a famous broken friendship with Wagner—he began by idolizing the composer and ended by despising him—devotes a strangely fortifying paragraph to the subject in *The Gay Science*. Trying to make lemonade out of the rotted lemons of broken friendship, he suggests that perhaps, in "a tremendous but invisible stellar orbit, such friendships might be renewed and better made." One would like to think this may be so, but the odds in favor of it are only slightly better than those in favor of the return of vaudeville.

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OBSERVATIONS

Candidate Giuliani

Fred Siegel

WILL RUDOLPH GIULIANI be a heavyweight presidential contender in 2008? Some of his enemies evidently think so. They have already begun to raise the alarm.

One early entry is *Giuliani Time*, a newly released documentary film that aims to land a preemptive blow. The title gives the game away even before the start. "It's Giuliani time" is the phrase said to have been uttered by a New York City policeman as he sodomized Abner Louima, a Haitian immigrant, with a broomstick in a Brooklyn precinct house in 1997. Louima later retracted that part of his story, but by resurrecting the words here, the movie signals, as a review in the *New York Times* put it, that its "agenda will be to associate Mr. Giuliani's tenure with brutality, racial revanchism, and contempt for civil liberties."

Within the film itself, the director Kevin Keating has lined up a series of talking heads to explain why the two-term mayor of New York is in fact to be regarded as an evil figure. The principal voice is that of Wayne Barrett, a *Village Voice* reporter and the author of a 1999 book, *Rudy! An Investigative Biography*, which argued that city hall under Giuliani was "a government of, for, and by white people." Other witnesses for the prosecution flitting across the screen include some who, in the pre-Giuliani era, helped bring New York to its knees. One of them is the political scientist Frances Fox Piven, whose influence during the mayoralty of John V. Lindsay in the late 1960's contributed to a doubling of the city's welfare roles; another is Norman Siegel, who as head of the New York Civil Liberties Union labored tirelessly to thwart the crime-fighting efforts of the New York City police department; a third is Ron Kuby, the attorney who played a bit part in lighting the long fuse that went off on 9/11 by helping to win a murder acquittal for Sayed Nosair in the 1990 assassination of Rabbi Meir Kahane. (Nosair's apartment contained plans for the 1993 bombing of the World Trade Center that were left untranslated and unread by the FBI.)

To be sure, a few defenders of Giuliani are also seen and heard. But by means of interspersed footage flashing to Victorian poorhouses, their testimony as to the salutary effects of the mayor's welfare reforms is overridden by the suggestion that the reforms were really responsible for creating Dickensian poverty. Similar treatment of the crime issue is aimed at repudiating the idea—the "myth," as the film would have it—that the mayor was instrumental in bringing down crime rates by means of his much-touted policies of "zero tolerance" and "broken-windows" policing; instead, we are told, crime rates had already begun to decline under David N. Dinkins, Giuliani's predecessor, and were also falling simultaneously in other major American cities. The only thing Giuliani accomplished was to turn Gotham into something resembling a police state.

Is it necessary to point out that not only in its particulars but in its entire reconstruction of New York's recent history, *Giuliani Time* is a mendacious and wildly distorted piece of work? To make the Dinkins years look like a period of racial harmony, for example, the filmmakers have had to omit any mention of the 1991 Crown Heights

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riot that eventuated in a full-scale anti-Jewish pogrom, let alone any mention of the poisonous interracial atmosphere, nourished by the accommodating policies of the Dinkins administration, that led to those events. On the other side of the coin, they have had to ignore the mountain of data attesting to Giuliani's astounding success, beginning in 1993, in restoring lawfulness, order, and energy to a city caught in a relentlessly downward spiral—and this, long before, demonstrating authority and compassion, he leapt into the hearts of Americans everywhere in the aftermath of 9/11. The fact that there is a niche market for a product like *Giuliani Time* should perhaps rather be seen as further evidence that today, five years after September 11, the former mayor's star continues to burn brightly in the national political firmament—as far as the angry Left is concerned, much too brightly for comfort.

HELPING TO burnish Giuliani's image around the country have been, ironically, a number of major disasters in which the sort of calming hand he demonstrated in New York has been sorely missed. One of them was the London subway bombing of July 2005; another, not two months later, was Hurricane Katrina, which devastated New Orleans and whole swaths of the American South. Although Giuliani said very little about either of these events, he did not need to say much. His presence in London during the subway attack (he had earlier been made an honorary Knight Commander of the British Empire) summoned fresh recollections, for the British and for television viewers worldwide, of his commanding role in the aftermath of September 11. As Katrina unfolded, he was the figure to whom the hapless politicians of Louisiana were most often *un*favorably compared. Former Clinton White House adviser David Gergen was not alone in lamenting about Katrina that "you can't tell who's running anything. I mean, there's no Rudy Giuliani in this story."

Further in the background, but serving no less to augment Giuliani's political standing by contrast, has been the continuing chain of American corporate scandals. In January 2002, a few days after the mayor left office, the Enron story erupted, soon to be followed by a string of smaller but equally serious trials of executives at major companies like WorldCom and Adelphia. Each has served to prompt residual memories of Giuliani's role as a keeper of public integrity from his pre-mayoral days as a federal prosecutor, not to speak of his role as an *example* of public integrity while in office.

But what about 2008? Are Giuliani's prospects real, and is he indeed a contender? More particularly, what are his chances in a Republican field where he might well be handicapped by his reputation not as a reactionary right-winger but, to the contrary, as a social and cultural liberal, especially on such issues as abortion, gay rights, and immigration?

At this early juncture, predicting the electoral future is a fool's errand. One of the few things that can be said with confidence is that the race is likely to be a wide-open affair—the first since 1948 without an incumbent President or Vice President on the ballot, and the first in 44 years without a Nixon, Dole, or Bush (unless Jeb runs) in the race. What is also certain is that this November's midterm elections, by setting the stage for 2008, will affect Giuliani's prospects in noteworthy ways.

The midterm elections are taking place within the context of President Bush's plummeting national support and a fever of Democratic expectancy. An iron rule of thumb is that a party in control of both houses of Congress, as the Democrats were in 1946, 1966, and 1994, and as the Republicans are now, is a party bound for trouble. That rule should hold this year as well. Although, at the moment, Republican control of the Senate still appears secure, the House is very much up for grabs.

THIS IS of significance for Giuliani on at least two counts, both somewhat counterintuitive. First, a Democratic takeover of Congress would be a gift for all Republican presidential candidates, but especially for a Republican centrist. The would-be Democratic speaker of the House, Nancy Pelosi, has already made it plain that she intends to put an investigation of the Bush administration at the center of her otherwise thin agenda—and thereby to replicate the mistake made by Republicans in the Clinton era. A variety of other high-profile Democratic leftists, including Charles Rangel and John Conyers, would ascend to committee chairmanships, giving the House so marked a partisan complexion as to enable even the most moderate of Republicans to position themselves to the Right of it.

Second, the better the Democrats do this November, the more likely it is that a shaken GOP will rethink its reliance on its core base of conservative voters; electoral defeat will provide impetus to seek out someone with appeal across the spectrum. Giuliani fits this bill handsomely.

True, even if November 2006 were to break favorably for the former mayor, he would have obstacles to overcome. A practical one is his personal finances. Saddled with a $6.8-million divorce settlement, Giuliani has been digging out of debt through the work of his consulting firm, Giuliani Partners, and through speaking engagements around the country. Still, the work of the firm, which specializes in helping troubled companies turn themselves around, has not only been profitable but has produced a national network of contacts of the kind that would be essential for a presidential run; the same can be said for Giuliani's speeches, which

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unfailingly elicit resounding and even adulatory responses.

On the downside, with so many different kinds of clients seeking and getting the advice of Giuliani Partners, conflicts of interest and other kinds of trouble will inevitably crop up and might well hamper a presidential run. One of the firms with which Giuliani has maintained a partnership, for example, has had close ties to some of today's most unpopular energy giants, including the now-defunct Enron. Giuliani was also highly compensated for advice about crime prevention in Mexico City that did not succeed in making much of a dent in that lawless metropolis.

When it comes to the most commented-on obstacle, the fact that Giuliani is allegedly out of step with the Republican base on hot-button social issues, this may turn out to be less of a liability than is routinely assumed. Gay rights, for example, may no longer be quite the third rail among Republicans that it was even a few short years ago. It remains to be seen how Giuliani will deal with the issue of homosexual marriage. (He opposes President Bush's call for a ban, and has supported civil unions for gay couples.) It also remains unclear whether a candidate with his shifting stance on abortion can win in the Republican heartland. Although he once supported partial-birth abortion, he now opposes it; further statements will no doubt attempt further to differentiate his position from pro-choice orthodoxy.

Finally, immigration. As mayor of New York, Giuliani showed little enthusiasm for tougher enforcement of immigration laws. More recently, he has come out in support of President's Bush's earned-legalization proposal. This is bound to play reasonably well among Republicans in the Northeast but poorly in many precincts elsewhere and especially in the Southwest, where wages are declining, crime rates are rising, and the Hispanic influx has led many to abandon the public schools. The widespread resentments that have been generated by the immigration issue place at risk Giuliani's reputation for toughness. If that goes, so could his support among middle- and lower-middle-class voters of the sort who so strongly identified with him when he was the get-tough mayor of New York.

SO THE road ahead is far from trouble-free—which does not mean that Giuliani would be unable to negotiate it. Thus far, his standing in national polls has remained quite high; together with John McCain, he hovers at first or second place in the Republican field, with support from Democrats and independents likewise registering strongly. In seeking a path to the Republican nomination, he would certainly need to retain the good will of these Democrats and independents—in short, to be no more a conventional candidate than he was a conventional mayor.

Here he might draw some lessons from the past. Like Eisenhower in 1952 (the last election year without an incumbent in the race), Giuliani brings a record of genuine, copiously documented, and broadly recognized achievement. His star status, together with that record of substantive achievement, gives him leeway to transcend ordinary political categories. In particular, his combination of a wonkish, even Clinton-like passion for addressing real problems—so much on display during his mayoralty—with a Reagan-like ability to articulate not only the implacable nature of America's enemies but the glory and promise of the American dream—so much on display in the wake of 9/11—makes him an *immoderate* centrist, one whose appeal will continue to cross party lines.

Giuliani's well-earned reputation for aptitude and proficiency can likewise serve him well with swing voters who have lost faith in George Bush's competency. He could even be that rare Republican able to bring into play the overwhelmingly Democratic states of California and New York; this alone could make him a formidable candidate in 2008.

Between now and November 2008, the political world might easily endure any number of shocks affecting Giuliani's (and everyone else's) candidacy. The shocks could come from a variety of directions, ranging from the Middle East and especially Iran, to a new Supreme Court ruling on abortion, to another terror attack on the United States, to a dip into economic recession. Giuliani might also be damaged by the airing of more personal laundry, like his messy personal life, his overzealous conduct as a prosecutor, or his ties to his old friend and ex-partner Bernard Kerik, the former New York City police commissioner who in 2004 had to withdraw his acceptance of the post of Secretary of Homeland Security and still faces a possible indictment for corruption. It would thus be premature in the extreme for Rudolph Giuliani to start drafting a victory speech. But as the makers of *Giuliani Time* intuited, the day is hardly inconceivable.

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OBSERVATIONS

Tales of Islam

Algis Valiunas

THE NOVEL, it used to be said, brings the news about our social and moral condition. In the West, many novelists have taken to abdicating that role in favor of political fantasy, epistemological sport, or the fingering of psychosexual wounds. But in the Islamic world, or so it would seem from a number of recently published translations, novels still focus on the great public questions as they shape individual consciousness and conduct. As a way into that world's understanding of itself, fiction may afford a deeper and more variegated view of reality than the one that comes to us on editorial pages or in the evening news.

The current wonder among literary imports from the Islamic world is Orhan Pamuk, a Turk with many connections in the West. Before him, only two novelists from that world had won any significant reputation in English translation: the Egyptian Naguib Mahfouz, known principally for *The Cairo Trilogy* (1956-57) and the only Arab writer ever awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature, and Abdelrahman Munif, born of Saudi parents in Lebanon, who likewise made his mark with a trilogy, *Cities of Salt* (1984-89). Mahfouz's masterpiece portrays three generations of a Cairene family from 1917 to 1945, and is informed by a fundamentally liberal and universalist vision. Munif's trilogy, by contrast, tends to scant private in favor of public life: his protagonists transform a traditional Arab desert kingdom into an oil-pumping subsidiary of the American industrial empire, and his trilogy is marked by strident polemicizing against the predatory West and its Arab collaborators.

These two disparate approaches and variations on them seem largely to have defined the imaginative territory of succeeding novelists as well, or at least those whose work has found its way into English. The great theme that announces itself more or less loudly is the vast divide between Islamic East and liberal West (including Israel). In some fictional treatments, the allure of modern Western liberalism heralds a drastic break, for good or ill, with Islamic faith and custom; in others, the fear of Western license, combined with the shame of longstanding Muslim failure, prompts a recoil into nationalist fanaticism or religious zealotry. The novelistic results, whether judged aesthetically or philosophically, are fascinating—if, to say the least, mixed.

THE LEBANESE writer Elias Khoury's *Gate of the Sun*, published in Beirut in 1998 but only now available in English,* attempts nothing less than an epic summation of Palestinian woe since the birth of Israel in 1948. The story is recounted by one Dr. Khalil, who is tending to a comatose *fedayeen* named Yunes in a Beirut refugee camp. Khalil is in fact barely qualified to be a nurse—he had three months of medical training in Mao's China—and a doctor is not what he set out to be: he was himself a proud and fierce warrior in Arafat's Fatah movement until a grenade pulverized one of his vertebrae and left him unfit for soldiering. The tales he tells his unconscious patient are mostly war stories—of his own experiences, the sufferings of people he has known or merely heard of, even the exploits

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* Translated by Humphrey Davies. Archipelago Books, 539 pp., $26.00.

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of Yunes himself. The record is principally one of defeat after defeat, and death upon death. But as in the *Iliad*, each fallen hero merits at least a word about the manner in which death took him, and nearly all of the fallen are heroic in their defiant innocence.

Around this blasted trunk, stories of love wind like lyric vines. But their sweetness, too, is blighted. Yunes, who once told Khalil that "I fought for the sake of a woman I loved," almost never saw his wife and children, having sacrificed personal happiness in the name of the larger struggle. Khalil's own experience has been—fleetingly—more hopeful. He had fallen in love with Shams, a paragon of Palestinian womanhood who commanded her own guerrilla brigade and who had killed a fellow warrior when he reneged on his promise to marry her. She was the first Palestinian woman, Khalil declares in admiration, to avenge a man's offense against her honor. But then Shams is murdered in turn, brutally machine-gunned by the dead man's posse.

One night, we read, as Khalil goes in search of photographs to illustrate his stories, a beautiful stranger asks him for directions, and they end up eating and drinking and making love. The encounter promises to reconnect Khalil to the springs of life: "Then all I remember is her arm around me and me being with her, around her, in her. Revolving and rising and tasting nectar such as I'd never tasted in my life." But when he returns to the hospital, he finds his patient Yunes dead; and when he later returns home, the nameless woman is gone. Thus do Khalil's consuming public and private passions turn to dust. In the novel's concluding sentences he can only grope his way through darkness: "I stand. The rain forms ropes that extend from the sky to the ground. My feet sink into the mud. I stretch out my hand, I grasp the ropes of rain, and I walk and walk and walk."

Gate of the Sun is a novel in which the dead command the living. It is only the Palestinian dead, however, who are entitled to Khalil's and Khoury's reverent attentiveness. The diabolical glamor of destruction enjoys great prominence in this book, as Khalil ardently recalls the reverence with which he and his friends used to gaze upon the ubiquitous posters honoring the Palestinian "martyrs." Even when he pulls back to acknowledge the appeal of ordinary life, it is only to embrace a war-is-hell nihilism that ends by exonerating all who kill and die: "Evil has no meaning, and we were just its tools. We're nothing. We make war and kill and die, and we're nothing—just fuel for the huge machine whose name is War."

Despite such scattered outcries, Khoury's novel is suffused with an intransigent warlike spirit and a remorseless hatred of the enemy who must be utterly extinguished. Israelis are portrayed here as bereft of all humanity—morally cretinous ogres who shoot unarmed old men in the face, level villages and massacre their inhabitants without a second thought, force prisoners to swallow their own broken teeth or stake them out naked on the ground all day, stone women returning to their ancestral homes, shelter livestock in abandoned mosques.

Although *Gate of the Sun* has been hailed by reviewers for its discernment and compassion, the fact is that its moral ledger, written in blood, feeds a self-righteous, undying enmity. To read this novel by a "moderate" Christian Arab is to glimpse some of the factors, psychological, political, and religious, that have gone into the political ascendancy of Hamas and enhanced the prospects of endless war.

ANOTHER PART of contemporary Arab reality is explored in *The Almond*—a first novel, originally published in Paris in 2004, by a once religiously observant Muslim woman in her forties who lives in Morocco and writes under the pseudonym Nedjma.* It is a feast of polemical obscenity, written to overcome the patriarchal inhumanity of modern Islam and to restore a pristine delight in the physical world, including the sexual pleasures that God meant to be enjoyed by women as much as by men.

The Almond is a bitter indictment of the wholesale betrayal of Muslim women by Muslim men:

> Who repudiated me? Who married and divorced me for the simple reason of safeguarding his ill-placed pride and his inheritance interests? Who beat me up after every lost war? Who raped me? Who ripped me off? Who besides me, the Arab woman, has had it up to here with an Islam you have distorted?

The molten rage of the narrator, Badra, makes the complaints of Western feminists seem tepid and trivial by comparison. And with good reason. As a seventeen-year-old girl in the Moroccan village of Imchouk, Badra is engaged by prearrangement to a forty-year-old notary named Hmed—a transaction conducted between the two mothers as in "a *souk* where human flesh is sold at a third of the price of regular meat." After the prospective husband's mother and sister "examined me from top to bottom, feeling my breasts, my behind, my knees, and finally the curve of my calf," Badra is forced to submit to a digital examination to confirm her virginity.

And that is just the beginning. The wedding night becomes a grotesque ordeal when Hmed cannot pierce her hymen; at last, brute force prevails as Badra's mother-in-law and her own sister hold her down and, when it is over, the "trophy of [her] maidenhead" makes the rounds of the village women. Five years of loveless marriage ensue in which Badra fails to become pregnant. Her husband writes her off as a total loss, his sisters taunt her with

* Translated by C. Jane Hunter. Grove Press, 241 pp., $22.00.

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her sterility, and even her mother turns her out, telling her, "Accept your fate like the rest of us."

Then comes her liberation. Running away to Tangiers, she finds shelter with a comparatively enlightened aunt, who restores her confidence and zest. Men come calling. Finally, at a louche and elegant party, she meets Driss, a cardiologist in his thirties just back from Paris, and she plunges headlong into love. Her initiation into sexual ecstasy transforms the way she views the world: in prose that ranges from bodice-ripper abandon ("The taste of eternity. The world had suddenly become a caress.") to throbbingly clinical exactitude, Badra explores every pleasure her body can have. In the process, she sheds Islam for a new religion:

> I knew I was living in pagan territory, that my faith had disappeared between my legs, daunted by the fact that bodies can give each other such pleasure. I knew I had crossed a divine line after crossing a social line, one that had cost me nothing. I knew that in Driss's hands I regressed into a creature from before the time of Jesus, before the Koran, before the Flood. That from here on in, I was addressing myself directly to God.

Of course it cannot last. After ten years as his loving mistress, Driss fails her, roping her into a foursome with lesbian prostitutes that leaves her emotionally ravaged, revealing an affair he is having with another man, and browbeating her with the loveless philosophy of the sovereign crotch ("We shouldn't complicate existence [beyond the genitals], my nightingale"). Leaving Driss, she pursues a promiscuous sexual career, traveling the world and pocketing a fortune from men she despises, indifferent to the pleasure she gives, rapacious in the pleasure she takes—until, at the novel's shamelessly sentimental end, Driss, dying of cancer, crawls back to her, lamenting his wrongdoing and professing his love. The two of them live together chastely until his death.

To a Western reader, *The Almond* can be both all too familiar and quite beguilingly exotic. The literary tradition that praises sexual boldness and offers salvation by way of erotic transgression is well-thumbed to the point of boredom, from *Lady Chatterley's Lover* to *Tropic of Cancer*, *Couples* to *An American Dream*, *Fear of Flying* to *The Vagina Monologues*. But that a Muslim woman should write a book so unabashed in its sexual coarseness, so brazen in its violation of Islamic decorum, can still startle and even thrill.

Unfortunately, pornography, even when earnestly convinced of its vast social consequences, is still pornography, and the route Badra takes up from slavery is more than a little ridiculous. If a Western woman writing in this vein—for instance, the former ballerina Toni Bentley, whose memoir of transcendence through anal sodomy was a recent popular and critical success—deserves to be treated like a fool, her Islamic counterpart can hardly be considered a visionary. The difference is that Nedjma is serious in a way Toni Bentley is not, and has risked a great deal in committing what millions of her coreligionists would consider capital transgressions. One can easily understand that, to some Muslims who manage to get their hands on a copy, *The Almond*, for all its inanity, could be a life-giving book.

SOMETHING SIMILAR might be said of a triple-decker *Bildungsroman* by the Saudi writer Turki al-Hamad, of which only the first two volumes, *Adama* (2003) and now *Shumaisi*,* have appeared in English. For Hisham, al-Hamad's hero, school textbooks are pap, and on his vacations in Beirut he loads up on writings that the Saudi censors prohibit: the politically incendiary classics of Western socialism and sexually fevered European novels that scorch his young consciousness, formed as it has been by parental stricture, monarchic authority, and religious edict.

Sex obsesses young Hisham, whom we follow in these two volumes through his final years in secondary school in a provincial Saudi city through his first year at the university in Riyadh. But his pursuit of erotic happiness is impeded by misgivings rooted in his pious upbringing. When a cousin arranges a hookup for him on a carpet in the desert with Raqiyya, a local slut, Hisham is unable to follow through. A second attempt is more successful, although a reflex of self-disgust propels him back to penitent rectitude; at the mosque, he prays "as he had never prayed before." To no avail: not only does Raqiyya become a habit but Hisham embarks on a career as a voyeur and ends up impregnating a woman who has watched him watching her. Soon enough, he comes to feel "all the misery of the world in his soul."

Politics turns out to be even more perilous than sex. In *Adama*, a firebrand schoolmate recruits Hisham for a cell of the outlawed Arab Socialist Baath party, whose members regard it as the sole agency capable of taking on the demonic host of "Zionism, colonialism, imperialism, capitalism, the forces of reaction, treachery, and conspiracies." By the time he becomes disillusioned with this revolutionary group, which looks to become at least as vicious and oppressive as the regime it intends to bring down, his brief involvement has made him a marked man. In the final pages of *Shumaisi*, Hisham's parents try to help him escape to Lebanon, but the tremulous young man is stopped at the airport and imprisoned. The volume ends with his arrival in Jeddah, where his fate will be determined by the Saudi authorities.

The cover of *Shumaisi* reprints a quotation from a BBC interview in which Turki al-Hamad declares: "Where I live there are three taboos: religion, politics, and sex. It is for-

* Saqi Books, 320 pp., $15.95 (paperback).

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bidden to speak about these. I wrote this trilogy to get things moving." But in the Arab world things move slowly, or in the wrong direction. The trilogy has been banned in several Middle Eastern countries, including Saudi Arabia, and four *fatwas* have been issued against al-Hamad's life. That he continues to live in Riyadh proves his nerve and resolution; that *Adama* sold 20,000 copies in its Arabic edition, enough to make it a best-seller, is cause for hope that others may find their nerve as well.

As fiction, al-Hamad's work may appear thin and undistinguished, especially if measured against such masters of the *Bildungsroman* as Goethe and Stendhal, Flaubert and Mann. But as with Nedjma's Badra, the unthinkable ordeal that Hisham must pass through to claim his manhood—or, perhaps, to lose it—endows him with an exemplary seriousness. Philip Roth's distinction between the West and the Communist bloc—here, everything goes and nothing matters; there, nothing goes and everything matters—applies to the world of these literary creations as well. One awaits the third volume of this trilogy with expectancy and trepidation.

AND THIS brings us back to Orhan Pamuk, the writer from the Islamic world who is today most celebrated in the West. Raised in a secular family and educated at Istanbul's Robert College, Pamuk is fluent in English and has taught in the University of Iowa's creative-writing program. Tracing the arc of his career fifteen years ago, John Updike wrote that Pamuk's progress from 1978 to 1990 had recapitulated the development of the Western novel: *Cevdet Bey and Sons*, regrettably never translated into English, is a family saga under the influence of Thomas Mann's *Buddenbrooks*; *The Silent House*, also untranslated, channels Virginia Woolf and William Faulkner; *The White Castle*, puckishly postmodern in the Borges and Calvino manner, affects to be a 17th-century manuscript dredged up from an archive by one of the characters in *The Silent House*; and *The Black Book* boasts the rarefied complexity of the post-postmodern.

Pamuk, Updike concluded in 1991, "evidently knows all the tricks Western literature has to teach." But he has deployed these formal borrowings almost exclusively to examine the encounter of Islamic traditionalism with Western innovation, and his examination is almost always subtle and intelligent. Among his earlier novels, *The White Castle* is a work of hopeful enchantment that searches the wounds Christendom and Islam have inflicted on each other over the centuries and offers the balm of perfect mutual understanding won by intense effort. At a distance of twenty years—the novel appeared here in 1985—Pamuk's aspiration to concord in the face of intractable enmity almost makes one weep.

Subsequent novels have returned again and again to the divide between Islam and the West, and on each revisiting Pamuk has come to see less and less chance of reconciliation. His latest effort, *Snow*,* cranks up the tension between Westernized liberalism and Islamist intransigence. Kerim Alkasoglu, who goes by the moniker Ka, is a forty-two-year-old Turkish poet and socialist activist who has spent the past twelve years as a political exile in Germany. A visit to his native Istanbul leads to a journalistic assignment to investigate a suicide epidemic among young girls in the city of Kars, near the Armenian border, and to an erotic pilgrimage to win the hand of the beauteous Ipek, whom he knew long ago and intends to bring back to Germany with him.

The suicides are "head-scarf girls," devout Muslims who kill themselves when the local authorities ban covered women from attending school. Ka, irreligious by upbringing and long practice, nevertheless finds this forlorn locale alight with numinous energy: "the desolation and remoteness of the place hit him with such force that he felt God inside him." The result is a rapturous flood of poetry after years of creative dryness.

But Ka knows that such belief as he has marks him as alien in his native land, where "faith in God was not something achieved by thinking sublime thoughts and stretching one's creative powers to their outer limits; nor was it something one could do alone; above all it meant joining a mosque, becoming part of a community." Increasingly, it has also come to mean demonstrating one's willingness to die or to kill for Islam—which in today's Turkey means waging war against the country's Westernized and secular democrats.

Against this background of incipient conflagration, Ka conducts a peripatetic theological discussion with anyone willing to take part. But he discovers that his soul lies incorrigibly on the Westernized side of the line: "he now knew that the greatest happiness in life was to embrace a beautiful, intelligent girl and sit in a corner writing poetry."

Pamuk's novel suffers from thematic overkill and perhaps more than a little oversimplification. Starkly setting the Western pursuit of happiness against the Muslim desire to turn every thought toward God—and, in extreme form, toward the destruction of His enemies—he labors ceaselessly to ensure that nobody will miss the point that in such a contest, liberalism is bound to be defeated. Ka wins Ipek only to lose her when she suspects him, perhaps correctly, of betraying her former lover, an Islamist terrorist, to the authorities. He returns to Germany alone, where he will be gunned down in the street as payback for his treachery.

Still, hammered as it may be, the point remains of the utmost significance, and Pamuk's insistence on it shows how far both he and Turkey have come from the blithe hopes of *The White Castle*. As he sees it, po-

* Knopf, 426 pp., $26.00.

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litical Islam explodes the Western ideal of self-contained happiness in the form of a purely private life, leaving a choice only between God and death. In a non-fiction work, *Istanbul: Memories and the City*,* a cultural history filtered through recollections of his youth, he writes bitterly that the "stupidity of the pious" possesses the force of passionate certainty, while Turkey's democratic secularists are given only to invertebrate wriggling, grappling "with the most basic questions of existence—love, compassion, religion, the meaning of life, jealousy, hatred—in trembling confusion and painful solitude."

How many Muslim secularists share such confusions is hard for an outsider to know. One can only hope that more of them are steelier in their liberal convictions than are their paralyzed or self-hating counterparts in the West. (Unfortunately, Pamuk himself, who was briefly prosecuted in Turkey last year for speaking publicly about the mass killings of Armenians by the Ottoman empire in World War I, has recently joined the useful idiots of PEN in denouncing the "savage, cruel war"—the war "against" Iraq, as he grotesquely terms it—that is "the shame of America and the West.") In such types, at any rate, and in those like them, we have placed many of our own hopes for the democratic transformation of the Islamic world.

What these novels from that world mainly reveal is a terrific if inchoate moral energy pressing for change and a resistance that is daunting in its fanaticism and its taste for blood. The works of these novelists hardly constitute a decisive blow for freedom. But, although frequently overdrawn and crude in their characterizations, and constricted in their sense of the diversity of human possibility, they remind us that the war we are in is indeed a war to the death, and that at stake in it is our own future as well.

* Knopf, 384 pp., $26.95.

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ART

What Clement Greenberg Knew

Terry Teachout

AMONG HIS various distinctions, Clement Greenberg (1909-1994) is one of the few art critics to have been portrayed in a movie. He figures prominently in *Pollock*, Ed Harris's 2000 biopic about the life of the painter Jackson Pollock. Indeed, there would have been no way to tell Pollock's story without at least some mention of Greenberg, whose reviews in *Partisan Review* and the *Nation* in the 1940's and 50's had been substantially responsible for making Pollock the first Abstract Expressionist artist to become known to the public at large.

Unfortunately—and ironically—Harris chose to have the part of "Clem Greenberg" played by Jeffrey Tambor, a comic actor who specializes in cringingly obsequious characters. It would have been hard to contrive a less apt characterization. In real life Greenberg was quarrelsome, bullying, and cocksure to a fault. His arrogance made him both a powerful critic and a formidable adversary, but it also earned him enemies by the score, and he lived to see them win out over him and to become ascendant in the world of postmodern art.

In falling from grace, Greenberg fell from a great height. He had been the first person to write both favorably and frequently about Pollock and the other painters now collectively known as the "New York School." Thanks to his prescient advocacy, he was for a time America's most powerful art critic. When he later wrote with similar enthusiasm about "color-field" abstractionists like Morris Louis, Kenneth Noland, and Jules Olitski, museum curators and collectors responded to his cue, and those painters, like the New York School before them, moved into the spotlight of renown.

But no critic of integrity can remain in the vanguard of fashion forever, and Greenberg's refusal to embrace the postmodern Pop Art of the 1960's cost him dear, not least because, in rejecting it, he also rejected the aesthetic relativism that was central to the postmodern project. "The practiced eye," he wrote in 1961, "tends always toward the definitely and positively good in art, knows it is there, and will remain dissatisfied with anything else." This position made him anathema to a new generation of academically trained art critics, many of whom had once been his disciples but who now were denying the existence of any such thing as "the definitely and positively good in art," not to mention the possibility that a mere journalist might be capable of discerning it.

By then, Greenberg had ceased to publish other than sporadically (though he continued to lecture into the 80's). Not until 1986, when the University of Chicago Press started to bring out a four-volume *Collected Essays and Criticism*, did commentators begin to reconsider his groundbreaking contribution to the reception of modern art in America. To this day, however, he is reviled by younger critics who find abhorrent his commitment to "quality" as the essential criterion for the evaluation of art.

IT STANDS to reason that a figure like Greenberg should have attracted the attention of biographers, and Alice Goldfarb Marquis's newly published *Art Czar: The Rise and*

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Fall of Clement Greenberg is in fact the second full-length treatment.[1] It was preceded eight years ago by Florence Rubenfeld's *Clement Greenberg: A Life*. Billed as a "social" rather than an intellectual biography, and written with Greenberg's cooperation, it proved to be both error-ridden and full of gossip (some of which, reportedly under threat of litigation, was trimmed from the text after bound galleys had already been sent out to reviewers).

Art Czar is a different proposition altogether. To begin with, though Marquis is rightly unsparing in cataloguing Greenberg's personal failings, I detect no malice in her portrait of a man who by most accounts was all too easy to dislike. More important, she is generally sympathetic to her subject's critical positions. Having been granted full access to Greenberg's private papers, and having interviewed many of his surviving friends, colleagues, and family members, she has used the resulting information wisely and well.

Unlike most biographies, this one is too short rather than too long. Many aspects of Greenberg's life and work thus go unexplored, some of them important (nothing is said, for example, about his fascinatingly contrasting views on Matisse and Picasso), others less so (*Art Czar* offers the reader no insight into what so many women found so attractive about so seemingly disagreeable a man).

In addition, Marquis, a scholar and journalist best known for her 2002 biography of Marcel Duchamp, apparently knows little of prewar American modernism or postwar American representational painting. This leads her, in common with most other critics, to undervalue Greenberg's catholicity of taste. It says much about her own point of view that she makes no mention of Milton Avery and almost none of John Marin, two important American modernists about whom Greenberg wrote extensively and acutely. She does no better by Fairfield Porter, whom Greenberg engaged in brief but violent battle in the pages of *Partisan Review* in 1955 and whom Marquis calls a "respected but more traditional artist"—a uselessly vague description that fails to note that Porter was himself a critic, and as fine a one as Greenberg.

On the other hand, Marquis has made a serious and mostly successful effort to explain Greenberg's place in the wider circle of the New York-based intellectuals among whom he lived and contended. This may well be the most daunting task facing any present-day writer seeking to come to grips with Greenberg's critical legacy. Just as few students of the New York intellectual scene know much about modern art, few art historians know much about magazines like *Partisan Review*, the *Nation*, or COMMENTARY (where Greenberg served as an associate editor from 1945 to 1957). Yet without this knowledge there is no making sense of Greenberg, whose career cannot be fully understood outside the tangled history of these publications and the world that spawned them.

Complicating matters still further is the fact that Greenberg became, in his own phrase, "an ex- or disabused Marxist"—one who rejected Soviet Communism (and, later, socialism) without ever freeing himself from the Marxist belief in historical inevitability that shaped his idiosyncratic view of modern art. To have been an anti-Stalinist, and to have broken with Marxism, continue to be viewed as unforgivable sins in many art-historical circles, and much of what has been written about Greenberg in recent years reflects that unfortunate reality.

To her credit, Marquis is unshocked by Greenberg's heterodoxy, though she is rather too inclined to accept the now-prevalent notion that the postwar popularity of Abstract Expressionism, a quintessentially "American" art, was directly related to the simultaneous emergence of cold-war anti-Communism. Even here, though, she presents Greenberg's own views clearly, acknowledging that he was above all an aesthete who never permitted his belief that "there are more important things than art" to color his visceral responses to the paintings about which he wrote so passionately.

GREENBERG'S PASSIONS were many. One of them, as we learn from this book, was his loathing for the bourgeois culture into which he was born in 1909. His parents were Lithuanian Jews, and Yiddish was his first language. In America, Joseph Greenberg became a successful businessman who understood the customs and manners of the bourgeois world for which his eldest son would develop only contempt. Indeed, the son's surviving letters are full of laments over the philistinism of his father, who sent him to Syracuse University but expected him to enter the family business: "O papa, if you could only read poetry." They are also full of shockingly crass anti-Semitic epithets. Though Greenberg would later admit that "a quality of Jewishness is present in every word I write," it is clear that he never came to terms with his own Jewish heritage.

After graduating from college, Greenberg, unwilling to embrace the middle-class existence of his parents but unable to earn his own keep, continued to live at home, working by turns for his father and at a string of miscellaneous jobs that led nowhere. He walked out of a brief, ill-advised marriage to a Gentile divorcée with whom he had little in common beyond sexual attraction (to which he would always be susceptible), leaving behind a schizophrenic son whose existence he resented and, in the end, ignored.

Not until 1938 did Greenberg move into a Greenwich Village apartment of his own, a develop-

[1] MFA Publications, 336 pp., $35.00.

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ment that coincided with his entry into the circle of Trotskyite intellectuals clustered around *Partisan Review*. William Phillips and Philip Rahv, the magazine's editors, had by then broken with the Communist party and were seeking a radical "third way" in politics that, however uncomfortably, could somehow be made to coexist with their belief in the modernist movement in the arts. Those were the days of the Popular Front, and of the line, dictated by Moscow, that art should place itself at the service of the struggle against capitalism—a view no less philistine in its implications than was the aesthetic indifference of Greenberg's father. It is thus hardly surprising that Greenberg should have been drawn to *Partisan Review*, so much so that he would later speak with something like nostalgia of "how 'anti-Stalinism,' which started out more or less as 'Trotskyism,' turned into art for art's sake, and thereby cleared the way, heroically, for what was to come."

Around the same time, Greenberg attended a series of lectures on abstract art by Hans Hofmann, an émigré painter from Germany who was soon to emerge as the most influential art teacher of his day. Abstraction was then little known and less appreciated in the United States. Electrified by Hofmann's aesthetic radicalism, Greenberg began to immerse himself in visual art, making his first trip to Europe in the spring of 1939 and declaring himself soon thereafter to have become "extraordinarily sensitive to painting" by "simply thinking about it."

Later that same year, Greenberg began to publish in *Partisan Review*. In his second essay, "Avant-Garde and Kitsch," he declared that the aesthetic methods of such disparate modernists as T.S. Eliot in poetry and Pablo Picasso in painting were "necessary" to the serious artist—indeed, that "by no other means is it possible today to create art and literature of a high order." For, in opposition to high art and high culture, there stood always the lethally seductive forces of commercialized popular culture, which Greenberg disdainfully summarized in the German word "kitsch" but whose power to subvert high art he feared and respected:

> Kitsch's enormous profits are a source of temptation to the avant-garde itself, and its members have not always resisted this temptation. Ambitious writers and artists will modify their work under the pressure of kitsch, if they do not succumb to it entirely.

"Avant-Garde and Kitsch" put Greenberg on the left-wing intellectual map, but it remained to be seen where he would go from there. For all the aggressive certitude of his literary style, he was not a truly systematic thinker. Nor was he at ease with the cut and thrust of the face-to-face debate favored by the New York intellectuals into whose ranks he had propelled himself. (He later admitted that "they could outtalk me, and how.") But his growing interest in the visual arts offered an alternative route to distinction, and he opted to turn himself into an art critic by sheer force of will. Despite the yawning gaps in his own knowledge, he began to write about art for *Partisan Review* and, later, the *Nation* with a deceptive self-confidence that in retrospect would seem almost laughable were it not for the high quality of the reviews that soon began to pour out of him.

Unsure of his authority when it came to the art of the past, Greenberg specialized in modernism. He was, as Marquis says, an amateur, but one with an astonishingly good eye, as well as a "homemade aesthetic" (in his own later phrase) that he had cobbled together out of historical determinism and Hans Hofmann's belief in the expressive power of abstract form. For Greenberg, the flattened-out cubism of Picasso and Georges Braque, and the abstraction that arose from it, was indeed the only way for artists to create what he would always refer to as "major" art. The impersonal forces of history, he believed, had brought the world of modern art to this point as surely as they were bringing about the collapse of capitalism and the emergence of a new socialist order.

In part because of the high-handed tone in which he wrote about art (and everything else), Greenberg's theory of modernism has been widely misunderstood. "I said that abstract art was inevitable given the conditions of history," he later explained. "I should have said that abstract art as a *major* way of painting was inevitable, but that this didn't exclude the representational."

This was not mere self-justification after the fact. Greenberg would always believe in the sole validity of the immediate experience of art:

> To hold that one kind of art must invariably be superior or inferior to another kind means to judge before experiencing; and the whole history of art is there to demonstrate the futility of rules of preference laid down beforehand: the impossibility, that is, of anticipating the outcome of aesthetic experience.

It was his commitment to experience—to the fruits of looking—that made Greenberg a great working critic. Though he would never modify his theories, he was (at first) capable of recognizing and acknowledging the quality of art that failed to accord with them. Writing weekly in the *Nation*, to which he began contributing regular reviews in 1943, he showed himself to be receptive not merely to abstraction but to many other styles: the witty, Matisse-influenced representation of Milton Avery, the hauntingly laconic urban realism of Edward Hopper, even the *New Yorker* cartoons of James Thurber.

Still, he did undeniably continue to believe that "the very best paint-

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ing, the major painting, of our age is almost exclusively abstract." He was thus prepared for the arrival of a group of American artists who understood its "necessity," and when they came along he embraced them at once. Time and again he looked at their paintings and explained what he saw in them so lucidly that it was impossible not to respond to his controlled fervor. Here, for instance, is what he wrote in 1949 about Jackson Pollock's *Number One*:

> I do not know of any other painting by an American that I could safely put next to this huge baroque scrawl in aluminum, black, white, madder, and blue. Beneath the apparent monotony of its surface composition it reveals a sumptuous variety of design and incident, and as a whole it is as well contained in its canvas as anything by a Quattrocento master.

Greenberg had begun writing about Pollock in 1943, and two years later had called him "the strongest painter of his generation and perhaps the greatest one to appear since Miró," adding that "he is not afraid to look ugly—all profoundly original art looks ugly at first." He was no less receptive to Willem de Kooning, Arshile Gorky, and the other painters of the New York School, claiming in a 1947 survey of American art published in the English magazine *Horizon* that "the fate of American art is being decided . . . by young people, few of them over forty, who live in cold-water flats and exist from hand to mouth."

The utter certainty with which Greenberg praised the Abstract Expressionists (as Robert Coates, the *New Yorker*'s art critic, had dubbed them in 1946) resonated far beyond the modest readership of *Horizon* and the *Nation*. In 1948 Greenberg took part in a roundtable discussion about modern art that was published in *Life*, then the most popular magazine in America and a voice of the "middlebrow" culture against which he had set his cap in "Avant-Garde and Kitsch." Praising Pollock and de Kooning in the strongest possible terms, he described the former's *Cathedral* as "one of the best paintings recently produced in this country."

A year later, *Life* published a feature story, "Jackson Pollock: Is He the Greatest Living Painter in the U.S.?" The anonymous author called Pollock "the shining new phenomenon of American art," mentioning that "a formidably high-brow New York critic" had cited him as "a fine candidate to become the greatest American painter of the 20th century." Though Greenberg was not named, everyone in the art world knew whom *Life* was talking about, and from that moment on he would be acknowledged as a significant force in American art.

FOR ALL his admiration of the Abstract Expressionists, Greenberg did not think them the last word in modernism—at least, not for long. He found their work uneven in the extreme, believing that de Kooning had ceased to be "major" by the end of the 40's and going so far as to attack Pollock's later work, curtly dismissing it as "forced, pumped, dressed up."

His growing dissatisfaction with Abstract Expressionism was rooted in distaste for what he came to regard as its unbridled emotionalism. "The art of no country," he wrote in 1947, "can live and perpetuate itself exclusively on spasmodic feeling, high spirits, and the infinite subdivision of sensibility." Instead, he longed to be consoled for the "dull horror" of life under capitalism by what he envisioned as

> a bland, large, balanced, Apollonian art in which passion does not fill in the gaps left by the faulty or omitted application of theory but takes off from where the most advanced theory stops, and in which an intense detachment informs all.

A decade after writing these words, Greenberg took up the cause of a group of younger artists whom he dubbed "post-painterly abstractionists." (Most of them are now known as "color-field" painters.) Their style, he explained, was distinguished by an "optical clarity" and "physical openness of design" that contrasted with the congested canvases of the Abstract Expressionists. They were also strongly color-oriented, somewhat in the manner of such older New York School painters as Mark Rothko and Clyfford Still. In the work of Helen Frankenthaler (with whom he was for a time involved romantically), Morris Louis, Kenneth Noland, and Jules Olitski, Greenberg had found his new Apollonianism, and for the rest of his life he would praise it as the highest and most advanced form of modern art.

By 1960, when Greenberg first began to write about these artists, his stature as a critic was sufficient in itself to assure them a hearing, and others quickly took them up as well. Yet his own critical output had already started to diminish. He had abandoned regular reviewing in 1949, preferring to express himself in longer essays that largely dispensed with the discussion of specific works of art in order to engage with larger aesthetic questions. This did not play to Greenberg's strengths as a critic—he was always at his most doctrinaire when spinning theories—and though he remained influential for a few more years to come, the perception that he had lost touch with the contemporary scene became increasingly widespread.

That perception would be fed by Greenberg's bluntly expressed dislike of the postmodernists of the early 60's. If he rejected their work, however, it was not out of mere ignorance but as a result of his conviction that artists like Robert Rauschenberg and (later) Andy Warhol were playing it safe. Although he admitted to finding "the clear and straightforward academic handling of their pictures refresh-

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ing after the turgidities of Abstract Expressionism," he pronounced the effect "only momentary, since novelty, as distinct from originality, has no staying power."

In this case Greenberg was right: the playful nihilism of postmodern artists inspired by the anti-art of Marcel Duchamp did prove in time to have been an aesthetic dead end. But his disengagement from the day-to-day duties of a working critic served him less well when it came to those American painters of the 50's and 60's who, while influenced by Abstract Expressionism, broke with it to adopt a looser style of representation that also drew on the post-Impressionism of such French artists as Pierre Bonnard and Edouard Vuillard. Though Greenberg recognized the quality of Richard Diebenkorn, among the most gifted of these painters, his belief that abstraction was the only possible route to the creation of major art led him to ignore similarly talented representational artists like Nell Blaine, Jane Freilicher, Alex Katz, Albert Kresch, and (above all) Fairfield Porter.

In any case, Greenberg was now devoting more and more of his energies to behind-the-scenes "practical" criticism. Not only did he visit the studios of the artists he liked and offer them advice, but he began to curate gallery shows and museum exhibitions; from 1958 to 1960, he also worked as a consultant to French & Co., a New York gallery that during his tenure showed the color-field artists. He also accumulated a large collection of paintings and works on paper, all of them gifts from the artists about whom he wrote.

From time to time, Greenberg would sell individual pieces from his collection in order to augment his earnings as a writer and lecturer. This practice, like his association with French & Co., would be branded as unethical by his enemies, though there is no evidence that his work as a critic was influenced in any way by his involvement in the art market.[2]

BETWEEN 1969, when the last piece in his *Collected Essays and Criticism* was originally published, and the time of his death in 1994, Greenberg's influence diminished to the point of invisibility. He was attacked both from the Left (which dismissed him as an elitist and a political apostate) and from the Right (especially by Tom Wolfe in *The Painted Word*, a 1975 polemic about modern art and its critics).

Yet Greenberg continues to be read, and there are even signs of a revival of interest in his work. Now that modernism is no longer an ongoing movement but a long-concluded chapter in art history, it has become easier to overlook the defects of his writings and focus on their virtues, especially by comparison with the work of the critics who came after him. In Marquis's words:

> Possibly a few more observers of the contemporary art scene had been repelled by the sea of kitsch threatening to overrun any aesthetic standard. Others may have been put off by the incomprehensible hash of deconstructionist cant masquerading, in many cases, as art writing. To many, it was probably a relief to delve into texts that offered a judgment, no matter how bold or misguided, after the lukewarm bath of influence and history that had become the art-critical norm.

Greenberg himself came to think that many of those who detested his writing had been influenced as much by the harshness of his rhetoric, which "provoked a lot of needless anger," as by the substance of his opinions. Indeed, he went so far as to acknowledge that his heavy-handedness "covered up a lot of insecurities." Yet he never altered his critical credo: "Art is a matter strictly of experience, not of principles, and what counts first and last is quality; all other things are secondary." Those who disagree with this—who deny, implicitly or explicitly, the existence of greatness itself—will never be able to accept Greenberg as anything other than a reactionary whose lifelong insistence that some works of art are better than others was at best perverse, at worst evil.

Greenberg's own view of his work was as forthright as the work itself. Asked to define "the function of the art critic in the art world," he responded: "He points, O.K.? He points." As he himself was well aware, readers do not always consent to look where the critic points. Nor is any critic, be he right or wrong, omnipotent.[3] Although Greenberg himself played a central part in winning recognition for the Abstract Expressionists, it was the quality of their art that ensured they would become known sooner or later. What he did was to speed up the process by pointing to them—and, more important, by articulating their merits in a permanently memorable manner.

That is why Clement Greenberg is now as much a part of the history of the art of our time as are the artists about whom he wrote. When he died, the headline atop the *New York Times* obituary summed him up in four words: "Art Critic Championed Pollock." In the long run, though, he will be remembered not merely for having been right about Jackson Pollock, or anyone else, but for having shed more light on modern art than any other American critic of his time.

[2] Seven years after Greenberg's death, his second wife Janice sold the residue of his collection to the Portland (Oregon) Museum of Art, which reportedly paid $2,000,000 for it.

[3] Marquis cites the case of Arnold Friedman, an extraordinarily talented American modernist who died in 1946, and whom Greenberg championed ardently. Yet his enthusiasm had no effect on the art market, and *Arnold Friedman: The Language of Paint*, a superb retrospective at New York's Hollis Taggart Galleries this past spring, was the first large-scale show of Friedman's work since the Jewish Museum's memorial exhibition of 1950.

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The Big Lie (II)

What about those Arab "refugees"?

In a previous installment of this series of *hasbarah* (educating and clarifying) messages, we discussed The Big Lie (I), namely that Judea/Samaria (the "West Bank") are occupied territories. This has been repeated so long and so often that most of the world has come to believe it. The Big Lie (II) is that of the Arab refugees. They deserve a closer look.

What are the facts?

The legitimacy of Israel. The state of Israel was legally created out of the dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire at the end of World War I. The area was desolate – desert and swamp – with some small towns and a few inhabitants, many of them nomads. The inhabitants, if they thought about it at all, considered themselves Syrians. The legitimacy of Israel arises from the Balfour Declaration issued by the British, who were given the mandate over the area by the League of Nations. Jews have lived in the country since Biblical times. The Arabs from the surrounding areas were lured to "Palestine" by the industry and prosperity that the Jews brought to the region. Envy, hatred, and religious fanaticism turned the Arabs against the Jews. In bloody outrages, horrible massacres, killings and rapes, the Arabs tried to dislodge the Jews, but were unable to do so.

> "Israel is not likely to . . . commit demographic suicide by letting the Arab "refugees" into their country."

In 1947, the British, having tired of the trouble and the bloodshed, resigned their mandate. That same year, the United Nations mandated partitioning of the territory. The Jews, though disappointed, accepted the partition. The Arabs rejected it out of hand and launched war against Israel. The armies of five Arab countries invaded the nascent state. Following the exhortations of the invaders, the Arab residents got out of the way hoping to return after victory was attained. They could then reclaim their property and that of the Jews, all of whom would have been killed or would have fled. That and that alone is the source of the Arab "refugee problem."

Had the Arabs accepted the UN partition plan, there would now have been a state of "Palestine" for the last 58 years. They might have attained a similar level of prosperity, advancement, and development as Israel, which, small though it is, is today in almost every regard one of the world's most advanced countries.

Not the only refugees. There is dispute about the number of those refugees. Best estimates are that about 650,000 people fled. But those Arabs are not the only refugees of the 1948 war of Israel's independence. About 800,000 Jews from Arab countries – from Morocco and Algeria to Iraq and Yemen – fled or were driven out of their home countries, where they had lived for centuries. Most of them left with just the clothes on their backs, leaving land, property, businesses, and wealth created over generations. Most fled to the newly-born Jewish state. They were received with open arms, immediately and fully integrated into Israeli society. They now form about 50 per cent of the population of Israel.

Not so with the Arab refugees. Their Arab brethren refused to integrate them into their countries and into their societies, but confined them in so-called "refugee camps," essentially extended slums, where they or rather their descendants – now the fourth generation – have been living ever since. The reason for the refusal to integrate them into their Arab host countries has been the design to keep them as a festering sore and to make solution of the Arab/Israeli conflict impossible. These "refugees" are seething with hatred toward Israel and provide the cadres of suicide bombers.

The Palestinian refugees occupy a unique place in the annals of warfare and migration of people. Such migrations are common and unavoidable in the long history of human conflict. Following WW II, millions of Germans were expelled from Czechoslovakia and the eastern regions of Germany that were turned over to Poland. In the upheavals that followed the withdrawal of the British from the Indian subcontinent, millions fled or were driven from their homes. Following France's loss of its Algerian possessions, hundreds of thousands fled that North African country. These millions of refugees and others were absorbed into their new countries and were no longer the concern of the world. It is only the Palestinians who, for almost sixty years, have been considered "refugees." In fact, a special branch of the United Nations (UNWRA) exists only for the maintenance of these "refugees," at a cost of billions of dollars

The problem of the "Palestinian refugees" is a red herring, fostered for almost sixty years in order to maintain the fiction that these "refugees" have the right to return to their "homeland." The original 650,000 have now miraculously swelled to 4 or 5 million. It is clear that, were they allowed to "return" to Israel, the country would cease to exist as a Jewish state. Since the "return of the refugees" is one of several non-negotiable Arab demands, and since Israel is obviously unwilling to accept them, the Arab/Israeli conflict would seem to be beyond resolution. Israel is not likely to succumb to Big Lie (II) and will not commit demographic suicide by letting the Arab "refugees" into their country.

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Books in Review

Terror & Denial

Londonistan
by Melanie Phillips
Encounter. 213 pp. $25.95

Reviewed by
Daniel Johnson

When Americans express anger or frustration at Europe's response to the global threat of Islamism, they generally make an exception for one country: Great Britain. The strong British presence in Iraq and Afghanistan, Prime Minister Tony Blair's staunch support of President Bush, the legacy of a common history, culture, and language—these have reassured Americans that the United States has at least one ally across the Atlantic on which it can depend.

If the new book by the British journalist Melanie Phillips is right, however, this is an illusion, and a dangerous one at that. A highly successful columnist and broadcaster, and at one time the news editor of the left-wing *Guardian*, Phillips reveals a very different Britain from the heroic nation that defied Hitler. In fact, she compares the mood today with that of the 1930's, the era of appeasement. As she shows, senior officials and their cultural cheerleaders still refuse to accept that they are confronted by a murderous, expansionist Islamic ideology, or that their own capital city has been transformed (in a term coined by the Western intelligence community during the 1990's) into "Londonistan." For Phillips, Britain is a nation in denial—about Islam, about terrorism, about Israel, and above all about itself.

Londonistan is, first and foremost, about the identity crisis provoked by the terrorist attack on London's transportation system in July 2005. As the British people learned to their horror, the suicide bombers were not foreigners radicalized by suffering or oppression but true-born Englishmen, with good families and good prospects. They differed from most of their contemporaries in only one respect: they were young Muslims who, as Phillips puts it, had "repudiated not just British values but the elementary codes of humanity." The leader of the bombers, Mohammed Sidique Khan, left behind a surreal video in which, speaking in a Yorkshire accent, he blamed his act of mass murder on British "atrocities" against "my people," meaning the Muslim *ummah*. He owed allegiance not to Britain but to Islam.

The British Muslim community numbers more than 2 million, which is less than 3 percent of the country's total population, but it is growing rapidly through natural increase, immigration, and conversion. How many others might there be like Mohammed Sidique Khan, biding their time before turning on their fellow citizens? Officials estimate that some 16,000 British Muslims actively engage in or support terrorism (not counting unknown numbers of foreigners resident in the country). Of these, some 3,000 have been trained at al-Qaeda camps in Pakistan or Afghanistan.

No less terrifying is the fact that even the supposedly mainstream elements in the British Muslim community have become more radical in their political theology. As Phillips shows in a pitiless unmasking, many

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of the "moderate Muslims" to whom the British authorities regularly pay obeisance are themselves hard-line Islamists, differing only by degree from more notorious recruiting sergeants for jihad.

Of particular interest to Phillips is Sir Iqbal Sacranie, secretary-general of the Muslim Council of Britain. Sacranie was knighted at the same time as Britain's chief rabbi, Jonathan Sacks, evidently for reasons of multicultural balance—though there is no intellectual or moral comparison between Sacks, one of Britain's most respected religious leaders, and Sacranie, who rose to prominence by supporting Ayatollah Khomenei's *fatwa* against Salman Rushdie. Though he is the government's chief Muslim interlocutor, Sacranie has an avowedly anti-Zionist and anti-Semitic agenda: he justifies Hamas suicide bombings, boycotts Holocaust commemorations, and harasses pro-Israel politicians. When his equivocal attitude to terrorism was exposed by a BBC documentary last year, Sacranie accused his critics of being part of a Zionist conspiracy.

THE REAL wonder, according to Phillips, is not so much that Sacranie and his followers have aired their detestable views, but that their propaganda has been granted legitimacy, even embraced, by British officialdom. Shortly before last year's bombings, Sir Ian Blair, London's police commissioner, declared: "There is nothing wrong with being an Islamic fundamentalist. . . . Bridges will be built." Even *after* the attack—the worst terrorist episode in London's history—an assistant police commissioner could tell the nation, "'Islam' and 'terrorists' are two words that do not go together." Shortly afterward, the police—for fear of raising tensions—persuaded the government to abandon its request for new powers to close down extremist mosques, as well as its plans to outlaw one of the most dangerous Islamist organizations, Hizb ut-Tahrir.

British security agencies do not understand Islamic jihad, Phillips argues, because they instinctively recoil from the idea of a war of religion. Having grown up in the shadow of Irish terrorism, they believe that, like the Irish Republican Army, the Islamists can eventually be induced, with the right package of concessions, to end their "armed struggle." To Phillips, this is nonsense: there is no deal to be made with those who want to turn Britain into an Islamic republic.

Phillips's deeper concern is to show how her country reached this pass in its attitudes toward Islamic extremism. The culprit, she believes, is the ideological constellation consisting of multiculturalism, moral and epistemological relativism, and a

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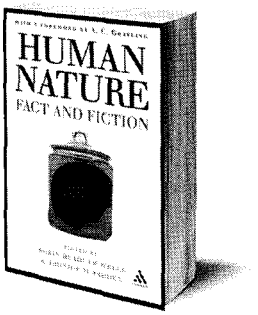

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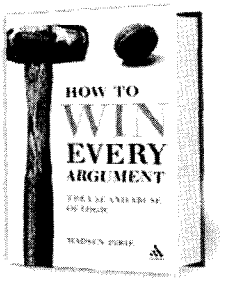

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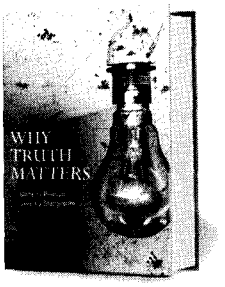

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perverted notion of human rights—all of which have served to "hollow out" traditional British culture. By encouraging Muslims to see themselves as victims, and by failing to instill respect for the majority culture, the British state, Phillips suggests, has connived in the creation of a minority whose instinctive response to terror is moral inversion. Thus, rather than accept responsibility for the jihadists in their midst, British Muslims have demanded that the government redress their *own* grievances, whether about Israel and Iraq or about the status in Britain of *shari'a* law. As Sacranie declared after the attacks on London, "the real victim of these bombings is the Muslim community of the UK."

Still more discouraging for Phillips has been the readiness of her former political allies to make common cause with the Islamofascists. "The Islamic jihad," she writes, "has turned into the armed wing of the British Left." What she calls the "red-black alliance" is especially united in its hatred of Israel. Ignorant of history and theology, the leading lights of the universities, the press, and the Church of England have failed (or refused) to grasp the connection between attacks on Israel and the threat to Britain. Instead of seeing Israel as the victim of the Islamists' "theological animosity" toward Jews and the West, they blame Israel (and its principal ally, the United States) for provoking terrorist attacks, and turn a blind eye to the prevalence of blatant anti-Semitism among their Muslim compatriots.

Londonistan is very much a *cri de coeur*. But it is not a cry of despair. Phillips advocates an ambitious program to reverse the process that has left Britain uniquely vulnerable to its enemies and uniquely dangerous to its allies. Abolition of wrongheaded human-rights legislation, tougher immigration controls, prosecution of Islamist radicals in special courts, bans on organizations and individual clerics who advocate extremism, close monitoring of mosques as well as of Muslim charities and schools—all of this and more would go far to remove the immediate threat. More problematic, though no less desirable, is Phillips's call for a restoration of the primacy of indigenous British culture and Judeo-Christian values.

Some consider Phillips an alarmist. My own view is that she has, if anything, understated the peril that the "Londonistan" phenomenon poses to the U.S. and to Europe, both of which owe a profound debt to the British culture that is now in such disarray. When I worked for the London *Daily Telegraph*, Iqbal Sacranie and Inayat Bunglawala—the latter, another of Phillips's subjects, is the media spokesman for the Muslim Council of Britain—came to see us several times. They strongly objected to our use of the phrase "Islamic terrorism," and demanded that Osama bin Laden be described not as an "Islamic" or even an "Islamist" terrorist but as an "international" one. To mention Islam in connection with terrorism, these lobbyists insisted, was "Islamophobic." Their demands were rejected despite hints that Muslim readers might boycott the *Telegraph*; but the state has been more responsive. Editors must now tread carefully because the law now punishes Islamophobia as a "hate crime."

Phillips has written a superb indictment of this frame of mind—an indictment, moreover, that no mainstream British publisher would touch—but will any of her recommendations be heeded? As she admits, "there is very little chance" of it. In fact, the problems she identifies are likely to grow. When the world turns its eyes to London for the 2012 Olympic Games, what it will see right next to the Olympic Stadium is one of the largest mosques in the world, with a capacity of 70,000 worshippers. The funds for this massive project have come from Tablighi Jamaat, an avowedly Islamist global organization that the FBI says is used by al-Qaeda to recruit terrorists.

It is hard to imagine a more potent symbol of the transformation of London into Londonistan. And it is hard to imagine a greater prize for the Islamists than the infiltration of the land that gave birth to liberty. Anyone who cares about Britain, or indeed about the survival of Judeo-Christian civilization, should read Melanie Phillips's brave and disturbing book.

Headmaster

The Mind Has Mountains: Reflections on Society and Psychiatry
by Paul R. McHugh
Johns Hopkins. 272 pp. $25.00

Reviewed by
Kay S. Hymowitz

Psychiatry has long been the sick man of medicine—a science without a laboratory, a discipline without a method, a field without boundaries. In an area of medicine like cardiology or dermatology, such confusion would present a danger primarily to those who suffered from heart disease or eczema. But in a therapeutic culture like our own, psychiatry's maladies infect everyone. Whether through the lingering fog of Freudianism or the invention of fashionable but medically dubious diagnoses, the psychiatrist disseminates ideas that are eagerly seized upon by a population lacking a rich alternative for describing inner life.

Throughout much of his career,

Kay S. Hymowitz, *a contributing editor of* City Journal, *writes on social and cultural issues for* Commentary.

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Paul McHugh has called upon psychiatry to heal itself. In his former post as director of psychiatry at Johns Hopkins, and in his many essays and reviews, he has appealed to his peers to examine their methods and presumptions and to shun the sort of overreaching that has produced library shelves groaning with volumes of junk psychiatry. Much of what he has learned and taught along the way is distilled in this collection, which includes several pieces first published in COMMENTARY.

The cure for psychiatry, McHugh contends, is fairly simple: more science. It is a measure of the poor health of psychiatry that this should even need to be stated. But psychiatrists, as he tirelessly points out, have been less inclined to seek out treatments for distinct conditions like dementia, depression, retardation, or schizophrenia than to theorize about them, sometimes wildly.

Chief among the sources of this theorizing has been Freudianism, and especially what McHugh calls its "romanticist" tendencies. Instead of using the scientific method to determine what ails their patients, psychiatrists "rely upon feelings for evidence, on metaphors for reality, on inspiration and myth for guidance." Nor do they show the slightest interest in empirical research to prove their intuitions. "[I]nfatuated with their own thought," they spin narratives about the childhood sources of their patients' suffering and pride themselves on their "depth."

They can do this, McHugh writes, because, like Freud and Jung before them, they prefer to treat patients who are most like themselves and to keep a safe distance from the worst cases. This allows them to view the symptoms of the schizophrenic or paranoid person as merely heightened versions of ordinary experience, "differing only in degree, not in kind."

Patients suffering from depression have been especially victimized by the romanticist fallacy. McHugh hardly denies that depression can sometimes be a symptom of commonplace "demoralization," on a continuum with normal psychological life. But in many cases, he insists, it is a sign of a true medical disease, an external "it" like cancer or epilepsy, "a thing unto itself and not just the dark side of human emotion." As such, it is not remotely susceptible of treatment by "evocative insight psychotherapy" of the kind practiced by one therapist, steeped in orthodox Freudianism, whose disastrous handling of a suicidal Harvard student is the subject of a chapter here. (The therapist was ultimately brought up on charges—but, tragically, only after the patient had killed himself.)

THE ROMANTIC fallacy has tarnished psychiatry for a long time. But in the 1980's and 90's, it mutated into a particularly vulgar form. McHugh's name for this is "Manneristic Freudianism," and its manifestations absorb several of the essays in *The Mind Has Mountains*. Egged on by radical feminists, the Mannerists took Freud's idea of the unconscious sexual roots of personality and from it wove a bizarre theory of rampant childhood sexual abuse (usually by a relative) that remains repressed deep in the victim's memory. Unable to integrate the trauma into conscious experience, the abused patient, in the Mannerists' reading, "dissociates," or disintegrates, into separate personalities known as "alters"; some therapists claimed to have had patients with as many as 80 alters.

In its heyday, this psychiatric fad wrought untold damage on patients and their families. If the memory wars—as the debate over Repressed Memory Syndrome and Multiple Personality Disorder has been called—have finally come to an end, it is not because psychiatry has healed itself but because of negative publicity and legal action by incensed—and innocent—parents.

For all its mischief, Freudian romanticism has been only one source of psychiatry's present-day ills. In general medicine, McHugh says, doctors know to distinguish symptoms from the underlying disease. But psychiatrists, with their lack of true scientific rigor, are easily duped into pseudo-scientific simplifications, and especially into "classifying mental disorders by their appearances." The official guidebook of the American Psychiatric Association—known as the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders—has swelled into a nearly thousand-page catalogue of supposed diseases, many of them invented to satisfy a particular group of psychiatric experts and their newly empowered clients.

Whether it is Vietnam veterans lobbying for the inclusion of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder or devotees of Multiple Personality Disorder, patients now arrive at the therapist's office announcing their own diagnoses—OCD (Obsessive Compulsive Disorder), ADD (Attention Deficit Disorder), social phobia (painful embarrassment in social situations), or the like—and demanding the drugs to treat them. Yet many of these are merely descriptions, not diseases; in the case of ADD, writes McHugh, "it is simply not true that most individuals deficient in [attentiveness and confidence] are sick."

Adding to the general confusion are medical ethicists, who, in focusing on patients' rights, have muddied traditional understandings of the struggle against disease and death. Not so long ago, new doctors graduating from Harvard pledged their "respect for human life"; these days, they refer to upholding patients' "dignity"—in other words, the right to die. Yet the rallying cry of dignity often leads to its opposite, as in the case of the victims of Jack Kevorkian, or in the case of Terri Schiavo, whose death by starvation, McHugh argues, represented a radical deviation from traditional hospice and medical care. For their part, psychiatrists have abetted this

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new "culture of death" by, once again, failing properly to define mental diseases like depression.

Given all this, there would seem little reason to be hopeful about the future of psychiatry. But McHugh is guardedly optimistic. If the theory that gave us the Oedipus complex and castration anxiety has gone the way of Soviet-style Marxism, advances in neuropharmacology, genetics, and epidemiology—and, McHugh posits more controversially, the accountability imposed by managed care—are helping to discipline therapeutic practice. As neuropharmacologists successfully prescribe different categories of drugs to different sorts of patients, and as neurologists locate brain-based mechanisms that drive certain behaviors, it has become increasingly impossible to maintain that "mental illness is all one, à la Freudianism."

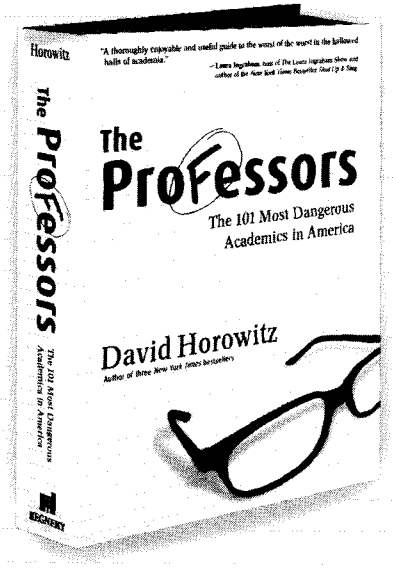
Some have worried that the shift to an empirically based psychiatry would lead practitioners to become unsympathetic, disinterested pill-pushers, but McHugh believes this has not happened. Psychiatrists are learning to make crucial distinctions between patients afflicted by illnesses that "rest upon bodily disease" and those whose suffering is caused by life situations. In short, after an extended adolescence, psychiatry may finally be growing up.

Paul McHugh writes with a wit and elegance almost extinct in his professional neighborhood. At their best, his essays, though considerably more polemical, bring to mind the graceful prose of Lewis Thomas or Oliver Sacks. The comparison works to his disadvantage in one respect: because McHugh avoids the anecdotal approach that has allowed many of his peers to evade scientific rigor, *The Mind Has Mountains* is often abstract in a way that, for example, Thomas's *Lives of the Cell* is not, and some readers will undoubtedly wish for more case studies. Still, McHugh's pithiness, lucidity, and professional modesty are themselves a tonic to psychiatry's usual oversimplifications, confusions, and grandiosity. The psychiatrist is a man of medicine, not a poet or a sage, McHugh reminds his readers. "We psychiatrists don't know the secret of human nature. We cannot build a New Jerusalem."

This raises an interesting issue. One secret that psychiatrists do not know, as McHugh observes on several occasions, is the answer to the "mind/brain problem." In recent decades, neuropsychiatry has made great leaps in understanding the brain as a medical organ, but it is still "unable to demonstrate how symptoms emerge directly from activity in, or changes to, the organ that generates them—namely the brain." The common vocabulary we use to describe inner states—fear, belief,

The 101 Worst Professors in America

Is your alma mater on the list?



Terrorists, communists, and racists–do you really know who is teaching our children? ***The Professors*** exposes only the tip of the academic iceberg.

Bestselling author David Horowitz's new book reveals the frightening truth about some of the worst academics in the country and what they are "teaching" our students today. Horowitz exposes how radical liberal professors are being promoted far beyond their academic achievement, teaching subjects outside their expertise to promote their own political agendas, and abandoning any pretense of academic discipline.

The Professors is an intellectual call to arms for parents, students, college alums, taxpayers, and patriotic Americans who believe in academic freedom. Get the book condemned by the ACLU!

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consciousness, self—do not necessarily correspond to brain events. Nor does the brain tell us much—yet, anyway—about why or even how our self-destructive friend is different from our well-adjusted cousin.

"I can't point to a single neuroscience discovery that would explain the most obvious psychological differences between people," McHugh writes. The brains of geniuses and ordinary people, of extroverts and introverts, do not vary in any significant way. Nor can science tell us very much about "selfness and intentionality." That is why some neuroscientists reject talk of the self altogether as an "expression of primitive thinking."

McHugh is far from that mindset. His is a humane sensibility. He clearly brings to his craft a belief that human beings have souls, minds, and intentions worthy of respect. No friend to Freudian psychoanalysis, he nevertheless does endorse the narrative, psychotherapeutic approach—what he calls the "life story perspective"—as a necessary part of the doctor's inventory, especially in treating "ordinary" grief, isolation, and demoralization. Yes, this approach can fall prey to "missionary zeal"; but when it is working properly, patients can find help through being "understood by some authority who is prepared to provide assistance in restructuring his or her thoughts and intentions into a story with more promising meanings."

In what sense, though, can psychotherapy as McHugh here describes it be considered medicine? He is entirely convincing that science is the route to understanding and treating diseases of the brain like schizophrenia, autism, dementia, and many forms of depression. But what about the sort of commonplace unhappiness that brings throngs of sufferers to consulting rooms not just at Johns Hopkins or on the Upper West Side of Manhattan but to offices all over the country?

About these sorts of patients, McHugh is less clear. On the one hand, he declares himself a proponent of the "cognitive-behavioral approach," which sets out to reorder the (presumably conscious) thoughts that (presumably) cause our feelings. On the other hand, he implies at several points that he also believes in the unconscious—though he makes no mention of its contents, its role in human psychology, or, for that matter, its part in the therapeutic enterprise. Yet surely if a therapist sets out to "restructure" unconscious as well as conscious thoughts, he is treading dangerously close to the sort of unempirical speculation that is otherwise the object of McHugh's censure.

More importantly, the therapist inevitably brings something of his own personal vision to his office—and, with that vision, unspoken assumptions about how to live a good life, about the limits of self-fulfillment, and about just what defines a "story with more promising meanings." In one of the few vignettes of actual treatment that he gives us, McHugh tells about a young female patient whose boyfriends have a habit of fleeing after sexual affairs. He tries to explain to her "how contemporary sexual mores, supported by easy contraception, tend to emphasize what one receives from an intimate relationship rather than what one brings to it," and "that she has been cooperating with a cultural system that permits males to remain perpetual adolescents." This is, assuredly, wisdom; but is it medicine?

For better or worse, America's middle classes turn to psychotherapists to make sense of their unhappy relationships, their failures, and their everyday miseries. One can only hope that some of these therapists are like McHugh himself. For if one thing is clear, it is that he has a humanistic vision, inspired by wide reading, deep reflection, and, one suspects, religious feeling, and nourished by thinkers ranging from Shakespeare (the subject of one chapter) to the philosopher Karl Jaspers (the subject of another). This learning cannot cure what ails psychiatry. But how lucky for McHugh's own patients, many of them otherwise bereft of the wisdom that he has plumbed and that is so movingly evident throughout *The Mind Has Mountains.*

Early Action

Preemption: A Knife that Cuts Both Ways

by Alan M. Dershowitz

Norton. 348 pp. $24.95

Reviewed by
Andrew C. McCarthy

IN THE aftermath of the 9/11 attacks, American officials were like a reeling prizefighter, fending off a barrage of blows with little thought of the rounds ahead. At issue was not just recovering from the devastation at the World Trade Center and the Pentagon; like the public at large, many in the military and in law-enforcement agencies feared a second wave of strikes. Sparse intelligence made an expeditious sorting of terrorists from innocents a practical impossibility. Could we afford to investigate the events of 9/11 under the ordinary procedures of the criminal-justice system? With thousands of lives hanging in the balance, could we leave potential al-Qaeda operatives at liberty until probable cause for issuing arrest warrants could be established?

These dire questions were answered on the wing, resulting in the mixed bag of outcomes one would

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expect in the face of so unprecedented a crisis. Alan Dershowitz believes that, even now, we have yet to think through the measures demanded by this dangerous new world, much less how they fit into our legal and political traditions. In *Preemption: A Knife that Cuts Both Ways*, the prolific Harvard law professor has applied himself to filling the need, calling for a jurisprudence that would permit and, at the same time, control government actions to forestall today's most dire threats.

Though he titles the book *Preemption*, Dershowitz actually focuses on two separate, albeit intimately related, species of anticipatory protective actions: preemption and prevention. Many languages, he points out, do not have separate words for the two concepts, and in English they are often conflated. Nonetheless, they are distinguishable. Prevention refers to coercive steps undertaken to disable or dispense with a potential threat at a very early stage, while it is still gathering. Preemption, by contrast, is action intended to eliminate a more concrete and immediate threat. Both stand in contrast to deterrence, the doctrine that prevailed during the nuclear stand-off of the cold war.

Dershowitz considers both notions along a spectrum, from the regulation of individuals to policies against other sovereign states, with our current campaign against international terrorist networks falling somewhere in between. Americans have long been uncomfortable with the idea of preventive action against individuals. Chief Justice Robert Jackson opined in 1950 that "the jailing of persons . . . because of anticipated but as yet uncommitted crimes" was against American tradition and "unprecedented." But, as Dershowitz points out, such conventional wisdom is hard to square with our actual history. Indeed, Jackson himself had been FDR's attorney general during World War II when the President ordered the internment of thousands of Japanese Americans, based on fear of their collusion with the enemy.

Though the cliché insists that Americans would prefer ten guilty men to go free lest a single innocent be wrongly convicted, this has not always corresponded to the practical realities of incarceration in the U.S. As Dershowitz shows, there is a rich tradition of preventive detention, especially as practiced by justices of the peace, who were long authorized to use "peace bonds" temporarily to detain troublemakers. Individuals thought to pose a threat to the community have also been sidelined by various other mechanisms, including forms of civil commitment for the mentally ill; denial of bail to defendants deemed dangerous; and refinements of the law to cover offenses, like vagrancy and conspiracy, for which jail terms are imposed even in the absence of completed crimes.

In the international arena, too, Dershowitz points out, ample precedent exists for anticipatory action. Though not the norm, and increasingly controversial, preventive wars are easy to find in the historical record, including the War of the Spanish Succession, initiated by Great Britain in 1700 to protect itself from the perceived threat of Spain and France joining together under a Bourbon king. In our own day, with the emergence of sophisticated terrorist groups and widely available technology for weapons of mass destruction, the U.S. has lost its margin for error, and prevention has taken on a new urgency.

For Dershowitz, the experience of Israel is particularly instructive in studying the uses and limits of anticipatory state action of this kind; those uses and limits constitute, indeed, the two edges of the "knife" referred to in his subtitle. Since the late 1950's, he explains, Israel has depended on a national-defense strategy of preemption, aware that the state's very existence might depend on exploiting its superior air power and carrying any necessary fight to the enemy outside its tiny territory. The policy's first test was the Six-Day war of 1967—a rout accomplished by attacking first, once Israel's gathered Arab enemies had made their intentions clear. The policy was a ringing success, but that success made it politically impossible to preempt again in 1973 when the threat was not so overt and when being painted as the aggressor would have led, catastrophically, to Israel's abandonment by the U.S.

The lesson, according to Dershowitz, is that preemptive action may be a nation's best strategy, but once it is used, any reprise is likely to be difficult, both politically and practically. Thus, Israel's 1981 bombing of the Osirak nuclear reactor in Iraq—Saddam Hussein had promised to use any resulting nuclear weapon against the "Zionist enemy"—provided an instructive warning to Iraq's neighbor, Iran, which has built diffuse, underground facilities far more challenging to destroy.

Preemptive measures also make it more probable that enemies will attack first the next time around, thus giving rogue nations a precedent to justify sheer aggression. Moreover, if preemptive initiatives unexpectedly lead to messy entanglements, they can undermine the national will to respond to future challenges. Cases in point here include the deleterious fallout from Israel's 1982 venture into Lebanon and, potentially, the ongoing American operation in Iraq.

All such qualifications notwithstanding, the key point, according to Dershowitz, remains this: the U.S. now confronts a radically new threat environment, one that may call for harsh measures like the preventive detention of terrorists and preemptive strikes against rogue nations. The consequences of shrinking from this reality could be cataclysmic—on the one hand, leading the government to default on its

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primary duty of protecting the governed; on the other hand, bringing about an unconsidered abridgement of our civil liberties.

So our first duty is to acknowledge that drastic times do sometimes call for drastic measures. Our second, Dershowitz believes, is to map out the likely scenarios, identify the relevant factors—quality of intelligence, dimension of the threat, extent and duration of the contemplated action—and arrive at sensible legal protocols for taking the initiative against emerging threats. Such exercises should be done with necessary humility, he insists, showing respect for the law of unintended consequences. Even the most thorough planning cannot account for every contingency, and this will sometimes counsel forbearance.

DERSHOWITZ's ambitious endeavor could not be timelier. Thanks to the challenge posed by Islamist terrorism, ours is a transformational era. Prosecuting completed crimes must now take a back seat to the imperative of preventing future attacks. In trying to guide us through this terrain, Dershowitz brings to bear the best of his estimable arsenal: a penchant for analyzing current problems through the lens not merely of legal scholarship but of philosophy, ethics, and comparative history; a determination that political correctness not become a substitute for thought or an excuse for ducking hard realities; and an engaging style that makes for a rapid, accessible read.

Does Dershowitz succeed in framing a new jurisprudence for our unsettling times? Not really. By his own account, reaching this goal will take years, and will require seismic shifts in some of our bedrock assumptions. He observes, however, that such shifts can happen, and points to Israel's preemptive attack at Osirak as an action that was subjected to universal condemnation at the time it occurred, but is now widely lauded.

Where Dershowitz fails to convince is in arguing that jurisprudence *is* in fact the best arena for dealing with the questions surrounding preemption. Plainly he himself is most comfortable discussing the issue in relation to judicial processes, even when it comes to the international scene. Yet, under the Constitution, no topic falls more clearly in the domain of presidential rather than judicial power. The framers saw the international realm as a place not for the law's antecedents and procedures but for the exercise of broad executive discretion. The latter can be abused, granted; but in confronting international crises, it is indispensable.

A message from Ronald S. Lauder

Negev residents enjoy their surroundings in Israel's next frontier.

Jewish National Fund has embarked on **Blueprint Negev**, a long-term vision to develop the Negev into a hospitable environment that will become home to 250,000 new people over the next five years. JNF plans include building reservoirs, creating infrastructure for new homes, identifying job opportunities, and attracting industry, while preserving the desert environment. JNF is creating a philanthropic bank to assist in financing loans for people moving to the Negev.

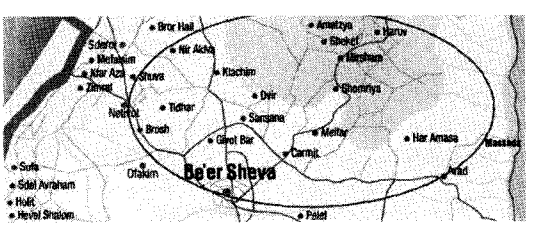
Our plan is to build 25 new communities and strengthen existing communities across the Negev. Here's an update on our work in the northeastern region.

At **Haruv**, 22 families have founded a community with the goal of growing to 210. Their vision is one of religious and secular Jews living side by side, sharing community resources and activities. JNF is providing temporary homes, the infrastructure for permanent ones and a playground for Haruv's children.

At Kibbutz **Shomriya**, established in the 1930's, only 13 families remain. The Israeli government approved a plan to turn over the kibbutz to 60 families evacuated from Gaza. Another 90 families will follow. JNF has cleared the land and is preparing the infrastructure for the permanent homes. The current kibbutz members will move to nearby Kibbutz Dvir where they will welcome additional families when the infrastructure is completed.

Once a military outpost, **Sansana** has been refashioned with the help of JNF as a new Negev town. It currently has 220 people and looks to expand to 2,200. Living in temporary JNF-sponsored caravans, residents have already found work in the area or study at nearby Ben-Gurion University in Be'er Sheva.

Giv'ot Bar, which literally means 'hills of grain,' has plans to grow to 500 families with JNF's continuing partnership. At **Carmit**, JNF is working with Nefesh B'Nefesh to establish an English-speaking community where Diaspora Jews can change the quality of life and image of the Negev.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Kfar Azza
Zikhron
Kfar Maimon
Kfar Az

This aside, however, in *Preemption* Alan Dershowitz has asked the right questions, pointed to the right data, and demonstrated the urgent necessity of confronting the most serious threats right now—while they are still at bay, though rising ominously on the horizon.

Church & Fate

The Victory of Reason: How Christianity Led to Freedom, Capitalism, and Western Success

by Rodney Stark

Random House. 304 pp. $25.95

Reviewed by
Mark C. Henrie

With a nod to Bernard Lewis's masterful study of Islam, *What Went Wrong?*, one might be tempted to re-title Rodney Stark's *The Victory of Reason* as *What Went Right?* Why is it that, over the past 500 years, the civilization that came out of Western Europe has been able to leap ahead of every competitor, at length bringing nearly the whole world under its sway and inducing the imitation of its characteristic institutions everywhere? Why exactly are we "on top"—or, rather, "ahead"—of everyone else?

The celebratory narrative of Western modernity is, of course, part of our mental furniture. At least, one version of it is. This is the version as told by, among many others, Edward Gibbon. On the one hand there is the glory of Rome, of universal empire and universal law under the tutelage of the universal reason of Greek philosophy. On the other hand there is the rebirth of classical learning in the Renaissance, the rationalization of Christianity in the Reformation, the takeoff of the scientific revolution, and the crystallization of secular modernity with the Enlightenment. Between the glorious peaks of the classical and the modern lies a millennium-long valley about which there is not much to say, except that it was in the middle, between the two peaks, or else that it was dark, as in the Dark Ages.

"It was at Rome," Gibbon wrote, "as I sat musing amidst the ruins of the Capitol, while the barefoot friars were singing vespers in the Temple of Jupiter, that the idea of writing the decline and fall of the city first started to my mind." "Barefoot friars" about sums it up. In Gibbon's account, what doomed the glory of Rome and thereafter inhibited the rise of the modern West was the victory of "superstition," which is to say, Christianity—and in particular, the Catholic Church.

Stark, a professor of sociology at Baylor University in Texas, aims to upend virtually every element of this narrative. For one thing, the West's rise did not start some 500 years ago. Already by 1492, the West was ahead—way ahead—of everyone else, technologically, economically, and politically. In fact, by Stark's estimation, the West was ahead by the 13th century at the very latest. What then *really* went right? Stark's answer is as narrowly focused as the proverbial laser beam: Christianity.

From the earliest times, Stark reminds us, Christians held that Jesus Christ was "the word (*logos*) made flesh," that is, reason incarnate. From the Church fathers, he adduces proof texts to show how this led to reason's assuming an unusually high status within Christianity as compared with, say, Judaism and Islam. True, both of these latter religions are monotheistic, but both also "incline toward strict constructionism and approach Scripture as *law to be understood and applied*, not as the basis for inquiry about questions of ultimate meaning." This "legal" approach to revelation necessarily rests on precedents and is oriented to the past. Christianity, by contrast, possessed from the beginning a confidence in reason that oriented its theological inquiry in a uniquely progressive way, allowing for both development and correction of doctrine. "The Christian image of God," Stark maintains, "is that of a rational being who *believes in human progress*, more fully revealing himself as humans *gain* the capacity to better understand."

As with progress in the science of God, so with progress in the other sciences. "Real science arose only once: in Europe," writes Stark. And this early-modern advance was not a fruit of recovered Greek learning—the Muslims had that learning, and they had no science. Rather, it was the result of confidence in God's rationality and the Christian apprehension that, as A.N. Whitehead put it, "there is a secret, a secret which can be unveiled." Christian assumptions about the cosmos and Christian institutions like the university—Stark might have added to this the charitable Christian imperative for "the relief of man's estate"—were the preconditions for science as a systematic and self-sustaining project.

Christianity also brought about a moral revolution of individualism, equality, and human freedom—a new understanding of universal human dignity—and this was auspicious for progress in at least two ways.

On the one hand, Christianity eliminated slavery, which had been the economic basis of the classical world: "Slavery ended in medieval Europe *only* because the church extended its sacraments to all slaves and then managed to impose a ban on the enslavement of Christians (and of Jews)." The end of slavery propelled labor-saving technological innovations. At the same time, work, nearly everywhere before seen as something servile, now became valued. A "work ethic" was ev-

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ident long before Max Weber's Protestants were on the scene.

On the other hand, political authority under Christianity was limited, both in theory and in practice. The "divine right of kings"—not a medieval but an early-modern theory—was vigorously opposed by the Church. Since all tyrannies tend toward plunder, the limitation of political power made it possible for those who got ahead to keep their gains, and so to make steady progress.

AFTER SKETCHING these "foundations," Stark presents us with often striking examples of technological innovation during the Middle Ages: windmills and waterwheels, the stirrup, horseshoes and horse harnesses, three-field crop rotation and fish farms, chimneys, clocks, and eyeglasses. All were either unknown or unexploited in classical civilization; all spread like wildfire during the Middle Ages. Contrary to the Monty Python view of medieval squalor, "Not only did most Europeans eat far better during the Dark Ages than in Roman times, but they were healthier, more energetic, and probably more intelligent."

Stark then turns in the last half of his book to an account of the rise of capitalism. After emphasizing how many modern business practices were invented in the hard-working and entrepreneurial medieval monasteries, he shows that, well before the Reformation, capitalism properly speaking emerged in the northern Italian cities and soon spread to Flanders. He also shows how the unusual circumstances of French and especially Spanish despotism prevented the emergence of capitalism in those Catholic lands.

As far as Western success is concerned, once capitalism has been secured, all the rest is commentary. Stark sums it up in his conclusion:

> Christianity created Western civilization. Had the followers of Jesus remained an obscure Jewish sect, most of you would not have learned to read and the rest of you would be reading from hand-copied scrolls. . . . [T]oday the entire world would be about where non-European societies were in, say, 1800.

WHAT TO make of all this? My guess is that this book was (lightly) worked up from classroom lecture notes: one can well imagine the frisson in Stark's students as their provocative professor—himself a nonbeliever—demolished one bit of conventional wisdom after another. But virtually every theoretical assertion and historical interpretation in *The Victory of Reason* is a gross exaggeration, a cartoon, desperately in need of nuance. There is no serendipity in Stark's account, no Hegelian "cunning of reason," no contingency, no confluence of causes, no dialectics, no *felix culpa*. In Stark's reading, Christianity wanted Whig progress, and that is what it got. This thesis utterly fails to convince, no matter how many grain-grinding waterwheels (5,624) the *Domesday Book* recorded in 11th-century England.

Is it really true that Christian theologians uniquely understood their work as tantamount to a progressive research agenda? No. They were explicating "the faith once delivered to the saints." In this they were not very different from their Muslim and Jewish counterparts. The Christian difference lies not in a superior devotion to reason, and certainly not in "progress" through reason alone, but rather in the peculiarity of the Christian revelation.

What had been revealed was not a law but the personhood of God and His relation to man. As a result, the burden of Christian theology was not only to make disparate scriptural norms logically coherent, but also to demonstrate that there was no contradiction between the revealed God and what was known from "natural philosophy." Philosophy was seen from early times as a *necessary* preliminary study to Christian theology in a way that was not true, or not true in the same way, for Jewish or Muslim theologians who also sought to reconcile the two ways of knowing.

What of the more general question of the Christian orientation to Whig progress? It is true that Eusebius, writing after the conversion of Constantine, assimilated divine providence to a triumphalist account of imperial progress. It was not Eusebius, however, but Augustine, writing his *City of God* after the sack of Rome in 410, who established what would become the normative Christian view on the matter. The divine intention in history, Augustine emphasized, could never be discerned in temporal terms. The Christian vocation is not worldly "success" or "glory," but the way of the cross. In the normative view, Christians are not progressives but pilgrims.

Late in the book, Stark distinguishes between the "church of piety" (the simplicity of the first Christians and later of the mendicant friars) and the "church of power" (the post-empire hierarchy, with its extensive secular interests)—and then he credits the success of capitalism to the triumph of the latter over the former. Does this not suggest that Western success can be attributed only to *bad* Christians? Stark fails to notice that if he is right about this, his thesis either falls or is in need of significant qualification.

But then, he hardly bothers with qualification anywhere. Is the stirrup (which enabled the heavy-armored knight, the medieval equivalent of the main battle tank) a "Christian" invention? To ask the question is to answer it. And what about the Goths? Nineteenth-century accounts of the rise of the West held that, in Montesquieu's words, "freedom was born in the forests": that is, the rudiments of government by consent and a system of rights as we know them were a Gothic heritage, not a classical or a Christian one. While Rome could not civilize the Goths, the Christians converted them. How exactly did Christian

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teachings interact with Gothic customs? Such questions are never asked, let alone answered.

The greatest frustration of *The Victory of Reason* is that Stark's goal of revising the Gibbonesque grand narrative is a sound one, amply supported by a vast scholarship. Stark makes use of some of this research, and his bibliography contains many works that anyone interested in the subject should consult. But by fashioning this careful research into so simplistically triumphant a narrative, he invites only derision. The otherwise laudable intention behind this book will have to look elsewhere for demonstration.

Madame President?

Can She Be Stopped? Hillary Clinton Will Be the Next President of the United States Unless . . .

by John Podhoretz

Crown. 272 pp. $26.95

Reviewed by
Jonathan Kay

In the run-up to the 1988 presidential election, Peter Kostmayer, a Democratic congressman, summed up his party's strategy this way:

> We're not going to blow it this time. Just shut up, gays, women, and environmentalists. Just shut up. You'll get everything you want after the election. But just, for the meantime, shut up so we can win.

According to John Podhoretz, a columnist for the *New York Post*, regular commentator on Fox News, and contributing editor of the *Weekly Standard*, Hillary Clinton and her supporters are intent on implementing the same strategy—and they are already smart enough to shut up about their true beliefs.

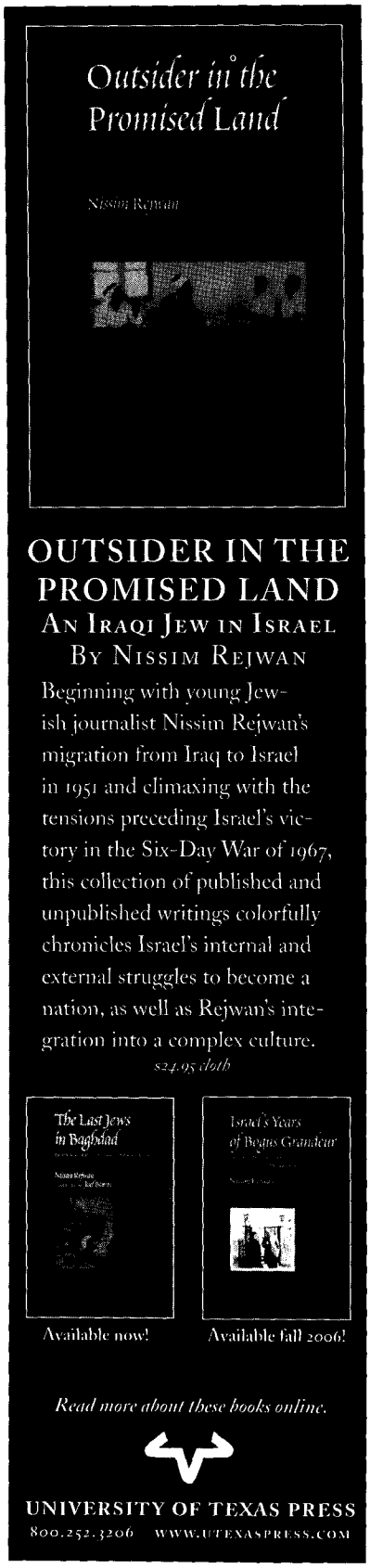
But make no mistake, Podhoretz warns. Although Mrs. Clinton might be masquerading as a centrist, she is liberalism's "Trojan Horse, its stealthy way back into power." Whatever she might say in the course of a campaign, once sworn in as President she would immediately set about raising taxes, overregulating the economy, coddling trial lawyers, embracing protectionism, appointing bleeding-heart judges, and backsliding in the war on terrorism. In short, Hillary Clinton would roll back all of the gains made by conservatives since 2000, and then some.

Can She Be Stopped? is a manifesto aimed at averting this parade of horribles. Written as a warning to his fellow conservatives, Podhoretz's diagnosis is stark, and so is his forecast: if conservatives are not careful, "the candidate [they] most dread" will be standing in front of Chief Justice John Roberts, right hand raised, on January 20, 2009.

Podhoretz's first order of business is to persuade skeptics that a Hillary candidacy must be taken seriously. On account of the heavy baggage the former first lady is seen to be lugging, many on the Right do in fact discount the threat she poses. But Podhoretz argues convincingly that she is no longer the polarizing and therefore unelectable figure she once was.

Since winning a Senate seat in 2000, Mrs. Clinton has cultivated a reputation as a collegial, hard-working lawmaker, all the while burnishing her moderate bona fides by such acts as voting in favor of the Iraq war and delivering a controversial (by Democratic standards) speech in 2005 urging the government to ensure that abortions occur "only in very rare circumstances." To a considerable degree, she has succeeded in distancing herself from the 90's-era firebrand who tried to

Jonathan Kay *is managing editor for Comment at Canada's* National Post.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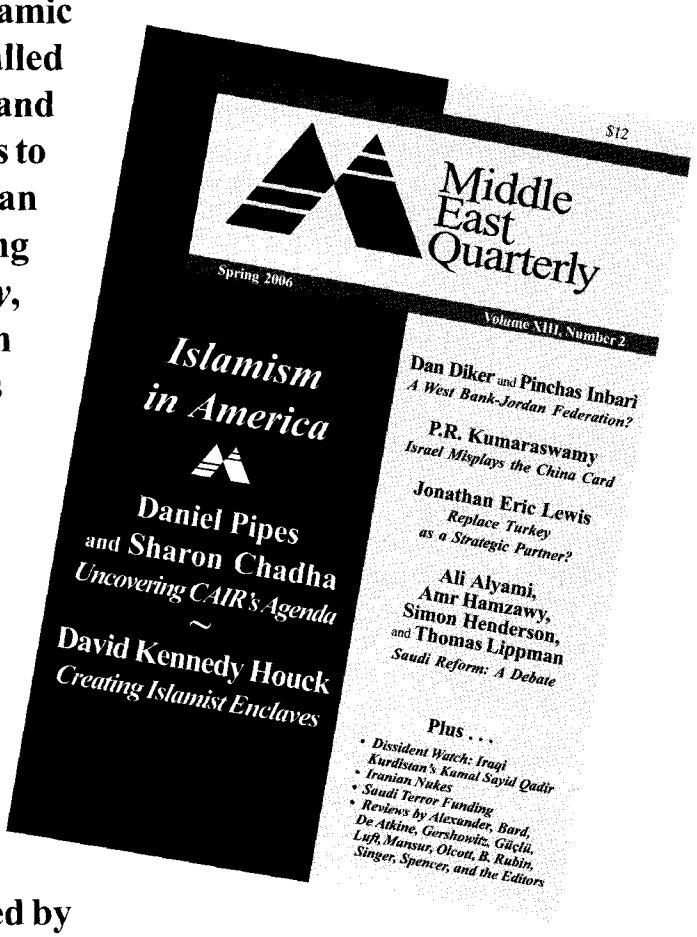
CAIR: Establishment Darling

The Council on American-Islamic Relations is often called on by government, media, and community organizations to be the voice of American Muslims. But in the Spring *Middle East Quarterly*, Daniel Pipes and Sharon Chadha reveal that there is much to object to in CAIR's history: links to terrorism; intimidation of its critics; foreign funding from Islamist supporters; and an insistence on Muslim supremacism.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foist a Rube Goldberg-like national-health-care scheme on America and proclaimed her husband the victim of a vast right-wing conspiracy.

True, polls show that 40 percent of Americans still hold a negative opinion of her. But this, in Podhoretz's view, is not necessarily a fatal disability. In today's highly partisan atmosphere, with mud flying in all directions, *any* serious candidate is bound to be disliked by a large quotient of the population. Mrs. Clinton has a head start in this department only because she is already a celebrity.

Nor does Podhoretz see any special reason why she would be held back as a woman. If men have enjoyed a natural advantage in presidential politics, that is because voters favor candidates who seem tough and confident—attributes typically associated with men. Unlike many other female politicians, however, Hillary has never tried to simper or exploit her feminine wiles. She does not have the "Straight-A-student demureness of Condoleezza Rice," but neither is she a "hair-shellacking big-'do type, like Republican Senator Kay Bailey Hutchinson." Instead, Podhoretz places her in the league of hard-edged political brawlers like Golda Meir, Indira Gandhi, and Margaret Thatcher.

So WHAT can be done either to stop her at the primary stage or, should she win the nomination, prevent her from prevailing in the general election? Podhoretz has plenty of advice for conservatives—more than can be neatly summarized here. But his main points include the following:

(1) In the pre-primary season, smoke Hillary out by treating her as the party's leader even before Democrats do. As Podhoretz sees it, the Democrats have clear positions on only a few domestic issues, and are completely at sea when it comes to foreign policy and defense. By pressing Hillary to declare herself on controversial matters—tax cuts, the United Nations, Iraq, gun rights, abortion, free trade, fighting terrorism—Republicans can force her to break ranks with and alienate what he calls "the neo-loon Left," whose outsized influence among party activists can decide the Democratic primary.

(2) "Do not fight the last war." That is, refrain from raising the issue of Bill Clinton's impeachment, or the Starr report, or the cigar, or the dress, or anything else that may have figured in a 1998-era Jay Leno monologue involving Monica Lewinsky. It would only make Republicans look desperate.

(3) Stick together. Much of the

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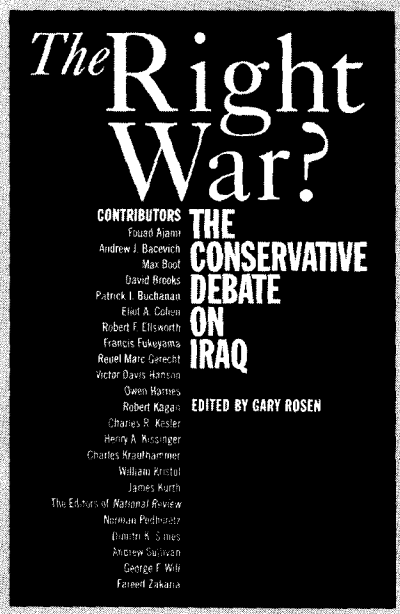

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book is taken up with urging hard-core conservatives not to bolt the GOP for a third-party protest candidate—something Podhoretz seems to regard as a genuine possibility. Even now, he points out, with the Republican party still controlling the White House and both houses of Congress, the country is moving away from the small-government ideal embraced by many conservatives. Deficit spending, mushrooming budget earmarks, and internecine fighting over immigration have conspired to demoralize the GOP base. In the face of all this, conservatives must not allow themselves to make the ideal the enemy of the good by deserting the party.

(4) Nominate as the Republican candidate for President the man who represents the most effective counterweight to Hillary's brand of crypto-radical politics. In Podhoretz's judgment, that man is Rudolph Giuliani.

AS A POLITICAL writer, John Podhoretz might be described as George Will meets Fox News. Like Will and other columnists of an older generation, he has an extraordinary command of American electoral history, polling statistics, campaign finance, and all the other minutiae that inform expert political analysis. Unlike them, however, he gladly does combat in the partisan mud-pit—and, as readers of *National Review Online* are well aware, he is no less fearless about mixing it up in debate with his fellow conservatives.

The style of such pugilistic encounters is reflected in the tone and language of this book. To wit: Al Gore speaks "like someone in dire need of Librium." East-coast liberals "think George W. Bush is an idiot chimp Hitler clone." Hillary Clinton was advised in the 1990's by "lunatic pseudo-intellectual conspiracy freaks with self-important hair." Tim Robbins is "the Oscar-winning actor whose talent for playing nincompoops onscreen is dwarfed by his talent for simply being a nincompoop in real life."

This combination of high erudition and low (and often funny) talk makes for an exceptionally spirited and engrossing read, if one that is best savored in smallish bites. In the pages of the *New York Post* and on Fox News, Podhoretz deploys the art of aggressive political punditry with energy and finesse. Perfectly suited for a 700-word blast, it can be a little hard to take over the course of an extended argument.

But this points to what is perhaps most interesting about *Can She Be Stopped?* Ten years ago, a book like this might never have been written, or published. Typically, in the era before cable television and the Internet had created mutually exclusive media markets on the Left and Right sides of the political spectrum, election tracts were aimed at influencing centrist voters. Podhoretz's book is a new and different sort of animal. It takes for granted that its readers have already made up their minds about the big questions of where they stand and where the country should be going, and are only in need of guidance as to how best to get there and what ammunition to pack for the battles ahead.

Mettlesome, frisky, humorous, *Can She Be Stopped?* provides that guidance, and more. Along the way, it also provides a virtuoso lesson in how to conduct the new, tribal brand of politics that, for better or worse, has now become our common lot.

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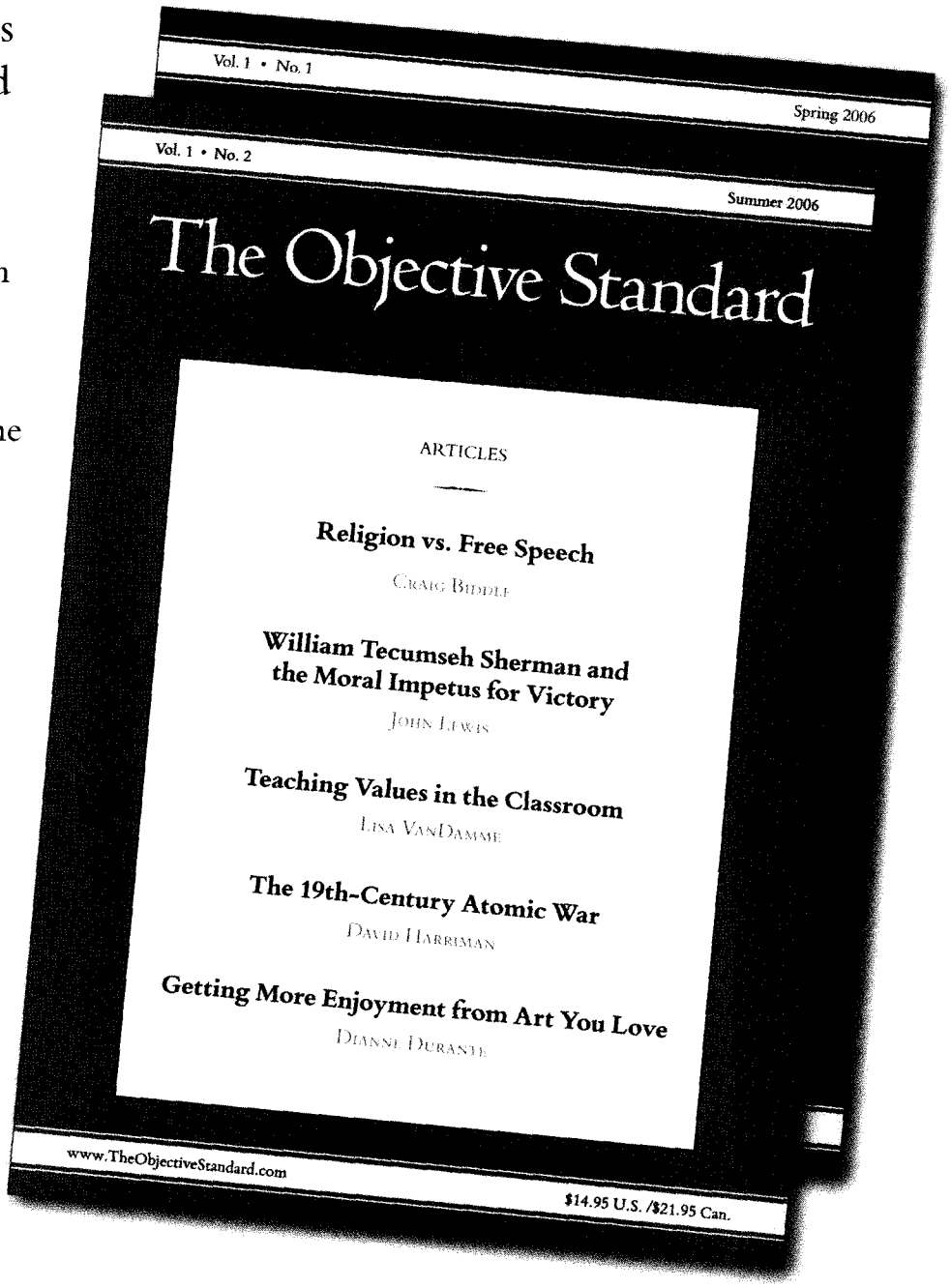

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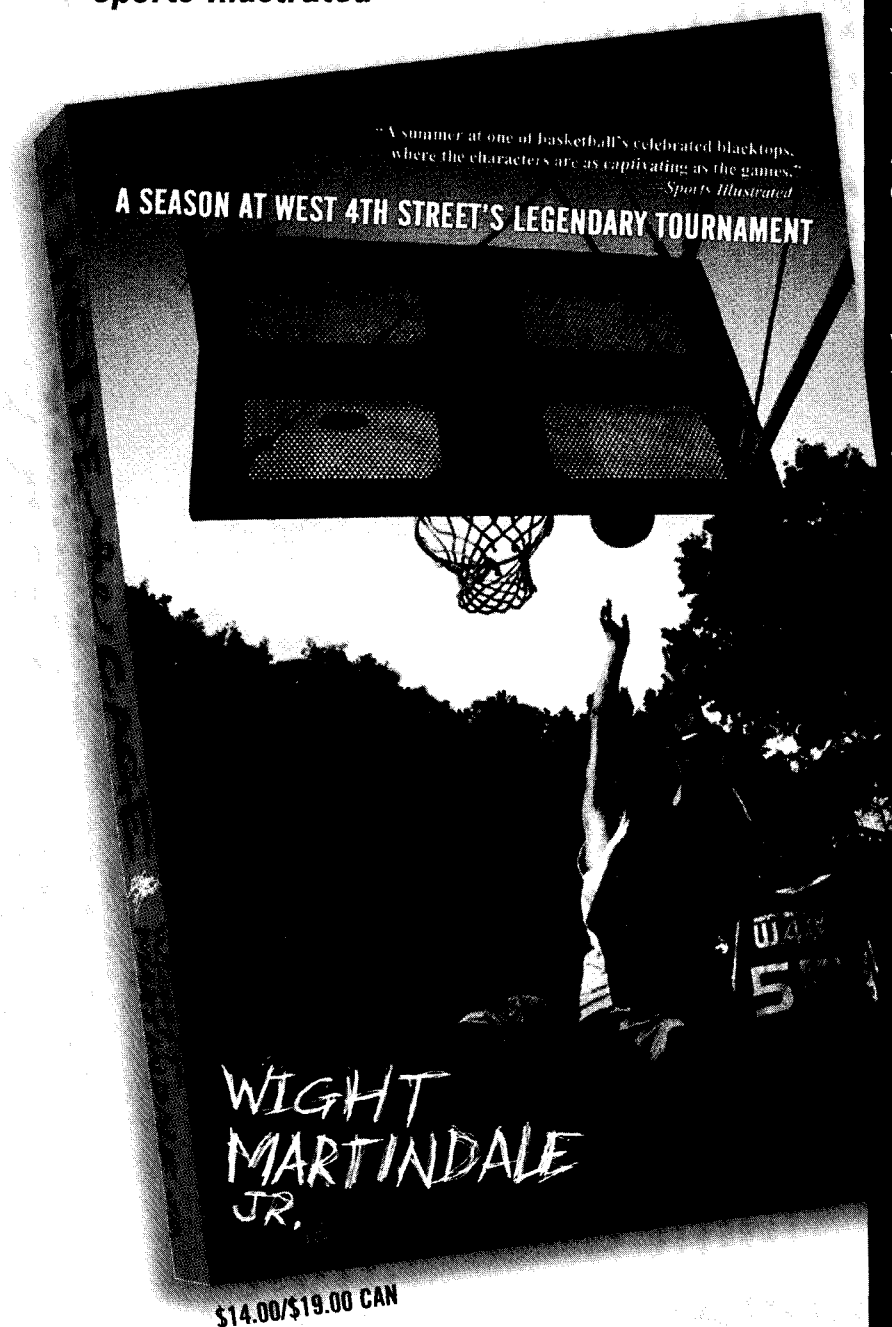
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